In the Name of Allah,
the All-beneficent, the All-merciful

قال الله تعالى:

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ ٱللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنكُمُ ٱلرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ ٱلْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا

Indeed, Allah desires to repel all impurity from you, O People of the Household, and purify you with a thorough purification.

(*Surah al-Ahzab* 33:33)

Prophetic traditions, mentioned in most reliable Sunni and Shiite reference books of *hadith* and *tafsir* (*Quran*ic Exegesis), confirm that this holy verse was revealed to exclusively involve the five People of the Cloak; namely, Muhammad, 'Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan, and al-Husayn, peace be upon them, to whom the term 'Ahl al-Bayt (People of the House)' is solely dedicated.

For instance, refer to the following references:

(1) Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 241 AH), *al-Musnad*, 1:331; 4:107; 6:292, 304. (2) *Sahih Muslim* (d. 261 AH), 7:130. (3) At-Tirmidhi (d. 279 AH), *Sunan*, 5:361 et al. (4) Ad-Dulabi (d. 310 AH), *al-Dhurriyyah al-Tahirah al-Nabawiyyah*, p. 108. (5) Al-Nassa'i (d. 303 AH), *as-Sunan al-Kubra'*, 5: p. 108, 113. (6) Al-Hakim al-Naysaburi (d. 405 AH), *al-Mustadrak ala al-Sahihayn*, 2:416, 3:133, 146, 147. (7) Al-Zarkashi (d. 794 AH), *al-Burhan*, p. 197. (8) Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (d. 852), *Fath al-Bari Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari*, 7:104.

As for Shiite reference books of *hadith*, refer to the following references:

(1) Al-Kulayni (d. 328 AH), *al-Kafi*, 1:287. (2) Ibn Babawayh (d. 329 AH), *al-Imamah wa'l-Tabsirah*, p. 47, H. 29. (3) Al-Maghribi (d. 363 AH), *Da'a'im al-Islam*, pp. 35, 37. (4) Al-Saduq (d. 381 AH), *al-Khisal*, pp. 403, 550. (5) Au-Tusi (d. 460 AH), *al-Amali*, H. 438, 482, 783.

For more details, refer to the exegesis of the holy verse involved in the following reference books of *tafsir*: (1) Au-Tabari (d. 310 AH), *Book of Tafsir*. (2) Al-Jassass (d. 370 AH), *Ahkam al-Quran*. (3) Al-Wahidi (d. 468 AH), *Asbab al-Nuzul*. (4) Ibn al-Jawzi (d. 597 AH), *Zad al-Masir*. (5) Al-Qurtubi (d. 671 AH), *al-Jami' li-Ahkam al-Quran*. (6) Ibn Kathir (d. 774 AH), *Tafsir*. (7) Al-Tha'alibi (d. 825 AH), *Tafsir*. (8) Al-Suyuti (d. 911 AH), *al-Durr al-Manthur*. (9) Al-Shawkani (d. 1250 AH), *Fath al-Qadir*. (10) Al-Ayyashi (d. 320 AH), *Tafsir*. (11) Al-Qummi (d. 329 AH), *Tafsir*. (12) Furat al-Kufi (d. 352 AH), *Tafsir*; in the margin of the exegesis of verse 4:59. (13) Al-Tabrisi (d. 560 AH), *Majma' al-Bayan*, as well as many other reference books of *hadith* and *tafsir*.

Imam Ali ibn Abi-Talib
The Successor to the Prophet

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ ﷺ:

إِنِّي تَارِكٌ فِيكُمُ الثَّقَلَيْنِ: كِتَابَ اللهِ وَعِتْرَتِي أَهْلَ بَيْتِي، مَا إِنْ تَمَسَّكْتُمْ بِهِمَا لَنْ تَضِلُّوا بَعْدِي أَبَداً، وَإِنَّهُمَا لَنْ يَفْتَرِقَا حَتَّى يَرِدَا عَلَيَّ الْحَوْضَ.

The Messenger of Allah (s) said:
"Verily, I am leaving among you two precious things [*Thaqalayn*]: The Book of Allah and my progeny [*'itrah*], the members of my Household [*Ahl al-Bayt*]. If you hold fast to them, you shall never go astray. These two will never separate from each other until they meet me at the Pond [*hawd*] (of *Kawthar*)."

Some references:

Al-Hakim al-Nayshaburi, al-Mustadrak ala al-Sahihayn (Beirut), vol. 3, pp. 109-110, 148, 533
Muslim, al-Sahih, (English translation), book 31, hadiths 5920-3
Al-Tirmidhi, al-Sahih, vol. 5, pp. 621-2, hadiths 3786, 3788; vol. 2, p. 219
Al-Nassa'i, Khasa'is Ali ibn Abi Talib, hadith 79
Ahmad ibn Hanbal, al-Musnad, vol. 3, pp. 14, 17, 26; vol. 3, pp. 26, 59; vol. 4, p. 371; vol. 5, pp. 181-182, 189-190
Ibn al-Athir, Jami' al-Usul, vol. 1, p. 277
Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa'l-Nihayah, vol. 5, p. 209
Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Quran al-Azim, vol. 6, p. 199
Nasir al-Din al-Albani, Silsilat al-Ahadith al-Sahihah (Kuwait: Al-Dar al-Salafiyyah), vol. 4, pp. 355-358

Imam Ali ibn Abi-Talib
The Successor to the Prophet

Grand Ayatollah Jaʿfar Subhani

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Sayyid Hussein Alamdar

Cultural Affairs Department Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa) World Assembly

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FOREWORD

The invaluable legacy of the Household of the Prophet [*The Ahl al-Bayt*], as preserved by their followers, is a comprehensive school of thought that embraces all branches of Islamic knowledge. This school has produced many brilliant scholars who have drawn inspiration from this rich and pure resource. It has provided the Muslim nation with many scholars whom, following in the footsteps of Imams from the Holy Prophet's Household (ʿa), have done their best to clear up the doubts raised by various creeds and currents within and without Muslim society and to answer their questions. Throughout the past centuries, they have given well-reasoned answers and clarifications concerning these questions and doubts.

To meet the responsibilities assigned to it, the Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly (ABWA) has embarked on a defense of the sanctity of the Islamic message and its verities, often obscured by the partisans of various sects and creeds as well as by currents hostile to Islam. The Assembly follows in the footsteps of the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa) and the disciples of their school of thought in its readiness to confront these challenges and tries to be on the frontline in consonance with the demands of every age.

The arguments contained in the works of the scholars belonging to the School of the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa) are of unique significance. That is because they are based on genuine scholarship and appeal to reason, and avoid prejudice and bias. These arguments address scholars and thinkers in a manner that appeals to healthy minds and wholesome human nature.

To assist the seekers of truth, the Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly has endeavored to present a new phase of these arguments contained in the studies and translations of the works of contemporary Shiah writers and those who have embraced this sublime school of thought through divine blessing.

The Assembly is also engaged in editing and publishing valuable works by leading Shiah scholars of earlier ages to assist the seekers of the truth in discovering the truths which the School of the Prophet's Household (ʿa) has offered to the entire world.

The Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly looks forward to benefit from the opinions of the readers and their suggestions and constructive criticism in this area.

We also invite scholars, translators and other institutions to assist us in

propagating the genuine Islamic teachings as preached by the Prophet Muhammad (s).

We beseech God, the Most High, to accept our humble efforts and to enable us to enhance them under the auspices of Imam al-Mahdi, His vicegerent on the earth (may Allah expedite his advent).

We express our gratitude to Grand Ayatollah Ja' far Subhani, the author of the present book. Our acknowledgement extends to our colleagues who have participated in producing this work, especially the staff of the Translation Office in the Ahl al-Bayt (' a) World Assembly.

Cultural Affairs Department
Ahl al-Bayt ('a) World Assembly

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The famous and great scholar, philosopher, historian, jurisprudent and writer, Grand Ayatollah Jaʿfar Subhani opened his eyes to the world on a prestigious, pious and religious family in Tabriz, Iran, on Shawwal 28, 1347 Hijri (April 8, 1929 A.D). His father Ayatollah Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Subhani Khayabani was a famous ascetic, scholar, and jurisprudent who taught the religious knowledge. After spending a valuable life in serving the religion and enlightenment of the people, he died at the age of 93 on 11 Shawwal, 1392 Hijri in the city of Tabriz, Azerbaijan, Iran; and was buried in Abu-Husayn Graveyard in Qum. Ayatollah Subhani, having finished his primary education, attended the *Maktab Khaneh of Mirza Mahmud Fadil* Seminary, where he learned the famous Persian Books: *Gulistan, Bostan, Tarikh-Muʿjam, Nasab al-Sabiyan, and Abwab al-Jinan* as well as other books.

At the age of 14, he joined *Madarseh Ilmiyeh Talibyeh* Seminary in Tabriz, and kept himself busy learning basic and advanced levels of various sciences under the able tutorships of learned scholars, such as Hajj Hasan Shaykh Nahavi and Shaykh Ali Akbar Nahavi. Also, he learned *Manzumeh, Sharh al-Lumʿah,* two basic book of Shiite jurisprudence, under the guidance of great Allamah (i.e. well-versed scholar) Mirza Muhammad Ali Mudarris Khayabani, the famous author of *Rayhanat al-Adab*.

During this period, while he was seriously busy in learning basics of religious sciences and principles and was only 17 years old, he wrote two important books; namely, *Mayar al-Fikr dar Manuiq* (a book on logics) and *Muhadhdhab al-Balaghah* (a book on rhetoric). In the year 1946 AD, he joined the famous Islamic Seminary of Qum, to complete the remaining advanced religious studies of principles of Muslim jurisprudence, *(Usul al-Fiqh)* under the tutorship of famous and eminent scholars like Ayatollah Mirza Mujahidi Tabrizi and Ayatollah Hajj Mirza Ahmad Kafi. He learned *Kifayat al-Usul* under the Grand Ayatollah Muhammad Rida Golpaygani. During this period, he was also able to participate in the lectures of most distinguished scholars of the Qum: Grand Ayatollah Borojerdi, Ayatollah Hajj Sayyid Muhammad Hujjat Kuhkamari, and Grand Ayatollah Imam Khomeini. While attending the lectures of Imam Khomeini until the completion of his course of *Usul*, Ayatollah Subhani successfully compiled the entire course during a period of 7 years that was published with an introduction written by Imam Khomeini during his lifetime.

He joined the Islamic Seminary at the age of 18, while simultaneously attending lectures of eminent scholars also involved him in teaching. During this period, he has given lectures on *Lum'atayn, al-Fara'id* of Shaykh Ansari, *al-Makasib* and *al-Kifayah, Sharh Manzumah, and Dars Kharij wa Usul* that has been one of the magnificent courses of the Seminary. One of the unique features of this course was that each lecture was published under his supervision and was attended by 600 students. He comes to his lectures with punctuality and presents the material about jurisprudence, principles, and beliefs in well organized manners.

While narrating quotations from earlier researchers and authorities of the relevant fields and paying tributes to their point of views, he scrutinized their works carefully with sophistication with the current state of art knowledge and appropriately adds his opinions and criticism accordingly. He listens patiently to any argument raised by his pupils and encourages them for debate. He reviews the notes taken by his students and guides them to write lectures in a good handwriting and organized manner. On each Wednesday, he offers commentary about the narrations of the Infallible Imams from the progeny of the Prophet Muhammad (s).

He has reviewed and edited some of the works of his pupils in jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, discourses and history, and has approved them for publication, thus encouraging and motivating them to engage in writing while simultaneously attending the lectures. During the years 1958-59, there was severe vacuum for the spiritual and religious material for the young people of the country and almost all of cultural magazines were associated and controlled with the corrupt Pahlavi regime. There wasn't a single magazine which is directly or indirectly involved in destroying the ethical and cultural foundations of Islam in Iran. Under such circumstances, a group of devoted scholars headed by Ayatollah Subhani decided to publish a magazine that they entitled: *Lectures from the Islamic School of Thought (Majjaleh-e-Dershaye az Maktabe Islam).*

After the victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, Imam Khomeini encouraged him to be a candidate in the election from Eastern Azerbaijan Province for the Assembly of Experts for the Constitution of the newly established Islamic Republic of Iran. He received millions of votes from the people and he was selected as First Representative. In this crucial task, preparation for the constitution from its inception to conception, Ayatollah Subhani played a key role that was officially recognized from the Tribune of the Constitutional Assembly by Dr. Behashti. Having successfully establishing the publication of *Majjaleh-e-Dershaye az Maktabe Islam*, he

was assigned for another important task of writing the Commentary of the Holy Quran. This task continued for several years that was in which he completed his commentary on Surah al-Tawbah, Surah al-Raʿd, Surah al-Furqan, Surah Luqman, Surah al-Hujurat, Surah al-Hadid, Surah al-Saff and Surah al-Munafiqun.

Ayatollah Subhani, together with Ayatollah Makarim Shirazi, replied to the religious questions raised by the people in the Magazine and ultimately published four volumes under the title: Answers and Replies to the Religious Inquiries *(Pursishha wa Pasukkha)*. After the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the Management Council of Religious Seminary of Qum decided to undertake a comprehensive research regarding revising its curriculum in the aftermath of the revolution. In this regard, Ayatollah Subhani published books in four disciplines of Islamic Sciences; namely, *Rijal* (biographies of the transmitters of Prophetic traditions), Doctrines, Differences, and Sects, which are considered the most valuable works by the authorities in these fields.

He started writing at the age of 18, and during his 48 years magnificent contributions to the Islamic Seminary of Qum, he always thought of establishing a special research institute for the religious studies. Fortunately, with the victory of the Islamic Revolution, his dream came true came true when the Educational and Research Institute of Imam al-Sadiq was inaugurated in the year 1980 A.D, on the Auspicious Day of Id al-Ghadir in the holy city of Qum. In accordance with the requirement of the post-revolutionary period, the institute desired to accomplish the following major goals:

1. Reviving the Islamic texts and researches about contemporary issues.

2. Works of distinguished Shiite scholars.

3. Criticism of and commentary on the current Islamic issues.

4. Replies to religious questions and inquiries.

5. Publication of short essays regarding current Islamic issues.

The Islamic Educational and Research Institute of Imam al-Sadiq currently possesses approximately 24.000 books, and a significant number of these books was donated from the personal library of Ayatollah Jaʿfar Subhani. If a researcher from a foreign country or from the Iranian cities comes to Qum for undertaking Islamic research, he can easily be taken for a guest of the center and can utilize its resources and facilities. He was also

instrumental in the establishment of the advanced study courses at the Islamic Religious Seminary of Qum in promulgation for the religion, Quranic exegesis and traditions. The tenure of these studies consists of 4 years and their completion is equivalent to a PhD degree.

Grand Ayatollah Subhani has been a pioneer in the defense of Shiite school of thought and its beliefs, and has written several precious books in this regard, from the very beginning when the ominous school of Wahhabism started its roots in Hijaz and its extremist, fanatic and petrified followers started attacking and repressing other Islamic thoughts. Although several eminent intellectuals and scholars from various countries took stand for the defense of other Islamic schools against this Wahhabi onslaught recently, the one who painstakingly took this challenge seriously was Grand Ayatollah Subhani, who published large number of valuable books against this ridiculous, superstitious and illogical Wahhabi ideology. His books have created a new and fresh wave of Islamic awareness throughout the Islamic regions. Through publication of several precious books against this illogical ideology, he succeeded in guiding a large number of sincere and devoted youths, especially in Sudan and Morocco.

He has shown a special respect to earlier Shiite intellectuals and elders, and has published about their contributions to his magazines. He is very particular to participate personally in their funeral ceremonies, offer Funeral Prayers as well recites the Holy Quran as a gift for their souls. As one of the most distinguished personality of the Islamic Seminary of Qum, he is very active in attending the educational conferences and seminars in various cities of Iran as well in foreign countries. He was selected as the chairman of the Sciences and Context of the Holy Quran Conference.

He has presented papers in the International Conference of Imam al-Rida (ʿa), Conference of Islamic Unity, Conference of Proximity between the Proximity between Islamic Schools, International Conference of Shaykh al-Mufid, Seminar for Paying Tributes to Allamah Tabataba'i in Tabriz and Kazoron, and Seminar of Payer and Islamic Conference for the Physical Issues, held in Iran. Grand Ayatollah Subhani is fluent in Arabic and most of his books are written in this language that have been widely distributed and welcomed by the scholars in Arab countries.

During his prolonged stay at the Islamic Religious Seminary of Qum, he has produced a large number of eminent scholars among his students, has been an active speaker in the cultural conferences, and published several articles for the cultural magazines in Iran. In addition, he has offered

numerous religious interviews and founded famous religious research institutes. He has extensively written on the topics of Quranic exegesis, Prophetic traditions, Muslim jurisprudence and its principles, Islamic discourse, history, philosophy, dignitaries, literary sciences, defense of Shiite school of thought, criticism of Wahhabism, and many other issues. Some of his famous works are listed as follows:

- *Commentary of the Holy Quran*
- *Eternal Charter of the Holy Quran* (14 Volumes)
- *Basis Of Monotheism From The Point Of View Of The Holy Quran*
- *Sedition, Tales of Hypocrites, and Human Knowledge*
- *Life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s)*
- *Resurrection in the Holy Quran*
- *Justice in the Holy Quran*
- *Council in the Holy Quran and Nahj al-Balaghah*
- *Limits of Miracles: Translation of Sayyid al-Khu'i's al-Bayan*
- *Knowledge of Characteristics of God*
- *Learning of Islamic Principles*
- *Resurrection*
- *Man and World*
- *Intercession from the point of view of the Holy Quran*
- *Tradition and Faculty of Reason*
- *Analysis of Philosophy of Karl Marx*
- *Ethics of Principles* 3 Volumes
- *Lectures of Principles by Imam Khomeini*
- *History: Eternal Radiance*
- *Comprehensive Analysis of the Life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s)*
- *Furugh Wilayat: A Comprehensive Historical Analysis Research Study about the life of the Commander of the Faithful Imam* Ali *(ʿa)*
- *Ilm al-Rijal*
- *Ideology*
- *The Code of Victory of Great Statesmen*
- *Shiite Personalities* (2 Volumes).

PREFACE

In the Name of Allah the Beneficent and Merciful

Researchers view human society like a calm ocean without any turbulence; with the passage of time, a portion of it gets dried up and, quite often, it is completely annihilated. The only thing that disturbs this calm ocean is a mild or strong storm. Wind and storm create turbulent waves that either destroy navigating ships, or rescue them by guiding them towards the shore. The makers of history are turbulent waves which disturb the status quo in human society and, either annihilate them, or lead them towards happiness and prosperity.

Heavenly messengers of God Almighty and their righteous representatives are makers of turbulent waves. With their unique guidance and conduct, they rescue the boat of human society. On the basis of divine scriptures, revelations, and the faculty of reason, they invite human beings to build their eternal abodes, guide them towards eternal shores of happiness and prosperity, and lay the foundations of great human civilizations. These grand architects confront the forces of degradation and wretchedness, and through heavenly guidance, perseverance and patience always bless mankind with dignity and honor. History bears witness that the illumination of revelation has resulted in the perfection of human reason and logic, and led to the progress of human civilization.

The Prophet Muhammad (s) was such an illumination that lifted mankind from the depths of darkness, ignorance and idol worship, and made it aware of its humanity. He founded such a great civilization that, according to everyone, it was the finest civilization ever witnessed by the world.

If only Muslims had marched in the direction that had been clearly assigned by him, avoided disagreement and division, controlled their egoism and prejudices, they would have plucked the most desirable fruits from the magnificent Islamic civilization. They would have still possessed their grandeur and majesty, and been guardians of the world against tyranny and corruption.

Ironically, after the passing away of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s), some Muslims engaged in dispute due to their love for power that created a dangerous deviation from the path of heavenly guidance, and the righteous leadership suffered a crucial blow. To be honest, why did Muslims show their ingratitude and oppose the authority of an Imam who had been

introduced by the Holy Prophet (s) on numerous important occasions throughout his life?

This opposition forced the highest ranking person among the righteous believers, intellectuals, scholars, politicians, thinkers and warriors, the greatest heavenly leader after the Holy Prophet (s), to confine himself to his home for a prolonged period of twenty five years; only to prevent division of the newly established Islamic society. It could be said with certainty that the world of that day not only failed to recognize Imam Ali (ʿa), but were not able to appreciate even a small part of the virtues that exalted the Imam.

After twenty-five years which, according to his own description, were like a thorn in the eye and a bone stuck in the throat, the deviation of the society from the straight path of leadership of the Holy Prophet (s) was clearly identified, and Muslims, after twenty five years, ultimately found an opportunity to compensate for whatever losses they had suffered, and went in search of the real leader, an exalted personality of their own. Once again, he tried to prevent deviation and establish a government of equality and justice, the cherished goal of the Holy Prophet (s).

People extended their hands in allegiance to Imam Ali (ʿa) with these holy intentions, and he too, accepted their allegiance. Heavenly assigned leaders are obliged to accept the opportunity to rise whenever the ground is ready for the establishment of a government of equality and justice; therefore, Imam Ali (ʿa) accepted their allegiance, but unfortunately, correcting the twenty five years old deep and widespread deviation wasn't possible without fighting the deviators.

His span of caliphate was, therefore, spent in fighting internal wars that began with those who broke their allegiance to him and ended by uprooting the apostates. He was martyred in the House of God just as he was born in the House of God (i.e. Holy Kaʿbah). His precious and blessed life signified a walk between the two most sacred places – the Holy Kaʿbah and the Mosque of Kufa- from God to God.

A few words about the book

The total life span of the Commander of the Faithful (ʿa) can be divided into five parts of history, as follows:

1. From birth until the prophethood of the Holy Prophet (s).
2. From prophethood until migration.
3. From migration until the death of the Holy Prophet (s).

4. From the death of the Holy Prophet (s) until his caliphate.

5. From his caliphate until martyrdom.

In these five parts, the life of Imam Ali (ʿa) has been presented comprehensively based on authentic sources. Efforts have been made to avoid exaggeration or assumptions without solid evidence. I have tried my best to refer to authentic sources, be precise, and explain the matter to the extent needed.

Having successfully completed and published the book: "*The Comprehensive Research Study of the Life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s), Eternal Radiance,"* the writer decided to write a book about the epic life of the Shiite pioneer of the world; Imam Ali ibn Abi-Talib (ʿa), in the same manner. Luckily, Divine Grace accompanied these efforts and four parts of the life of that great statesman were published in one volume.

The outcome of the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran created the free political environment forcing me to combat the fallacies of various schools of thought, especially Marxism, and postponing my writing about the most sensitive and memorable period of his life. However, after a little while, Divine Grace repeated itself and I accomplished my goal and completed the duration of his epic life in an analytical manner suitable for the present generation.

This book presents a picture of his personal life, education and knowledge, piety and asceticism, virtues and talents, sermons and discourses, letters and magazines, pieces of advice and sayings, debates and arguments. His miracles and judgments, his companions and their lives, have not been included, since each required a separate book.

The writer of the book, *Radiance of Viceregency,* humbly admits that he couldn't even present half the profile of the illuminated face of that great statesman in these pages, but is proud to be listed among the writers about Imam Ali (ʿa):

"Not every desire of human beings can be fulfilled,

The wind doesn't blow every ship towards its destination."

Jaʿfar Subhani
Imam al-Sadiq Institute, Qum, I.R. Iran
15 Rajab, 1410/ January 11, 1990

THE LIFE OF IMAM ALI
BEFORE THE DIVINE MISSION

GREAT PERSONALITIES
FRIENDS AND ENEMIES

Generally speaking, conflicting stands are taken regarding the great personalities of the world. There are friends who don't care about themselves and, like a moth, sacrifice their existence for the sake of their friendship and tolerate the worst kind of taunts, insults and torture. There are enemies who are extremely revengeful and do not accept the path of peace and sincerity. Friendship and enmity of these people sometimes become so fierce and widespread that they do not accept any limit or boundaries, nor confine themselves to a particular time and place; rather, they keep these fierce conflicts alive for future times and places.

Among great personalities, none except Imam Ali (ʿa) has been judged with such conflicting views; so much love and hatred has not been seen by two opposing camps. Perhaps, only Jesus Christ (ʿa) can be compared to Imam Ali (ʿa) in this regard. A majority of Christians visualize Jesus Christ (ʿa) as god, incarnated in physical form to relieve his own servants from the inherited sin of their father (Adam) and ultimately crucified! Contrary to this belief, the Jews accused, belied, deceived and crucified him.

Unfortunately, such a contradiction exists about Imam Ali (ʿa), too. A group, because of their low level of understanding and short sightedness, combined with their fierce love for him, has elevated the supreme leader of monotheism to the position of godliness; miracles and supernatural acts that have been shown by him throughout his lifetime were taken as a proof of his godliness. Unfortunately, this group of Alawites exists, and a significant number of people still follow this view. It is most unfortunate that the Shiite propagation machinery hasn't yet succeeded in utilizing these enormous sentiments to show the real face of Imam Ali (ʿa), and invite them towards the straight path of monotheism, for which the Commander of the Faithful (ʿa) offered his own life.

From the beginning of the caliphate of Imam Ali (ʿa), there were gangs hostile to him and, with the passage of time, appeared in the form of rebels and enemies. The Holy Prophet (s) was aware of these two deviating groups during the caliphate of Imam Ali (ʿa), and in one of his discussions he told him: "Two groups will be destroyed because of you; the group that would exaggerate your status to godliness, and the group that would bear enmity

against you."(1)

Another similarity also exists between Jesus Christ (ʿa) and Imam Ali (ʿa) which is about the place where these two exalted personalities opened their eyes in the world at the time of their births. Jesus Christ (ʿa) opened his eyes in the holy land of Bethlehem, which is the Dome-of-Rock and from this consideration was regarded to be superior as compared to other messengers of the Children of Israel. While the leader of freemen opened his eyes miraculously inside the House of God; the Holy Kaʿbah, and was martyred in the House of God; the Mosque of Kufa. Thus, he was blessed with two unique ranks as compared to any one else in history.

Imam Ali's personality

According to psychologists, three important factors play a crucial role in the development of the personality of any individual. They are: heredity, education and training, and environment.

The moral goodness or wretchedness of a person is founded upon these three important parameters. Regarding heredity, children inherit not only physical characteristics like facial features but also virtues and morals of parents through their genes.

One single teacher is capable of changing the ultimate outcome of a child or a class. It is very often that environment pollutes the righteous and vice versa. With the crucial influence of these three, it is ultimately human desire and decision that dominate and supersede them.

Inherited personality of Imam Ali

The Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali (ʿa) was born from the loins of a father like Abu-Talib who was the chief of Mecca and the tribe of Banu-Hashim. His entire existence, saturated with munificence, benevolence, love, valiance, and sacrifice, was devoted to monotheism. When the grandfather of the Holy Prophet (s), Abd al-Muttalib, died, the Holy Prophet (s) was only eight years old. From that day until he was forty two years old, Abu-Talib assumed his guardianship at home and while traveling. With unique love and devotion, he valiantly offered all he had, including his own life, to the belief that the Prophet (s) was preaching the true faith of monotheism. This reality is reflected in many relevant poetic verses composed by Abu-Talib, such as the following:

Let all the righteous and good know that Muhammad is a prophet like

(1) *Nahj al-Balaghah*, Short Sayings 117.

Moses and Jesus.[1]
Don't you know that Muhammad is a heavenly prophet like Moses?
His prophethood is written in the template of heavenly scriptures.

Abu-Talib's self-sacrificing life ultimately ended up with a confinement of his entire clan in a dry, sterile area for several years, for no other motivation than fierce love for the exalted goal of protecting the Holy Prophet's message. Other such factors as family bonds alone can't produce such a self-sacrificing spirit. Proofs of Abu-Talib's faith in the ideology of his cousin are so abundant that they have caught the serious attention of many neutral researchers. Unfortunately, there are groups who, because of their unfair prejudices, remain silent about Abu-Talib, while some others are so hostile that they introduce him as a nonbeliever.

If only a part of these proofs, found in historical books and traditions about the Islam of Abu-Talib, would have been written about another individual, there would have been no doubt left about his Islam, but it is quite strange that the abundance of all these logical proofs and arguments couldn't illuminate the hearts of some people!

Imam Ali's mother

His mother, Fatimah, was the daughter of Asad, son of Hashim. She was amongst the earliest women who declared their faith in Islam. She believed in the Holy Prophet (s) and, before that, was on the faith of Abraham (ʿa). She encountered the severe pangs of birth while circumambulating the Holy Kaʿbah and she went close to the wall of the Holy Kaʿbah and said: "O God! I bear witness that I have pure belief in You, Your holy messengers, and Holy Scriptures sent by You, as well as in the teachings of my grandfather Abraham–the builder of the Holy Kaʿbah. O God, for the sake of his honor as well as for the sake of the child that I hold inside my womb, please make the birth of this child easy upon me."

Instantly, Fatimah found herself inside the Holy Kaʿbah miraculously and she delivered the baby.[2] This special distinction has been mentioned collectively by all Shiah and non-Shiah scholars and researchers and transmitters of historical events.[3]

Al-Hakim al-Nayshaburi has narrated: "Ali's birth inside the Holy Kaʿbah

(1) Al-Tabarsi, *Majmaʿ al-Bayan*, 4/37.

(2) Al-Irbili, *Kafsh al-Ghummah* 1/90.

(3) Al-Masudi, *Muruj al-Dhahab* 2/349; al-Khafaji, *Sharh al-Shifa* 1/151.

has reached us by successive oral narration."[1]

Al-Baghdadi, a famous author, has written: "Ali's birth inside the Holy Ka'bah is famous and well recorded among the nations of the world, and until now, no one has been blessed with this most noble distinction."

In the shelter of the Holy Prophet

As we divide the life of Imam Ali ('a) into five parts, the first part consists of his life before the prophethood of the Holy Messenger (s); his age doesn't exceed more than ten years because when he opened his eyes to the world, the Holy Prophet (s) was not more than thirty years old, and he was assigned the prophethood at the age of forty.[2] This most impressionable part of his life was shaped and developed by the Holy Prophet (s) himself. The personality of a child at this age is like a white page which is ready to accept any form drawn upon it. This age gives the best opportunity to his teachers to develop the moral virtues that have already been placed as a trust within his structure.

The noble Messenger of Islam assumed the training of Imam Ali ('a) since his birth with this objective. When Imam Ali's mother brought the newly born child before the Holy Prophet (s), she noticed his extreme affection for the child. The noble Messenger asked her to place the child's cradle near his own bed, so, the earliest period of Imam Ali's life received the special attention of the noble Messenger. During the day, he washed his body and fed him with milk, and when he woke up, he talked to him with great love and hugged him, and said: "This child is my brother; in the future, he will be my helper, deputy, vicegerent, and the husband of my daughter."

Because of his special fondness for Imam Ali ('a), he never separated from him, and whenever he went out of Mecca for worship, he took him along like a younger brother. The aim of this special care was that Imam Ali's personality should be formed only by the Holy Prophet (s), and no one else should have any influence on him. Imam Ali ('a) spoke about the valuable services of the Holy Prophet (s) as follows: "The companions of the noble Messenger are completely aware about my special relationship and the special position that I possess near him. They know that I was nourished in

(1) Al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak ala al-Sahihayn* 3/483.

(2) Some narrators like Ibn al-Khashshab, in his book *Mawalid al-A'immah*, consider the total age of Imam Ali as sixty five years and his age before the Prophethood as twelve years. Refer to al-Irbili's *Kashf al-Ghummah*, page 65.

his lap with love and compassion. When I was new born baby, he hugged me, placed my bed next to his own, massaged me with his own hands, and I used to smell his sweet fragrance when he placed the food in my mouth."

The Holy Prophet takes Imam Ali Home

Since God Almighty had already destined that Imam Ali (ʿa) should be raised in the house of the exalted noble Messenger, Islamic researchers have written the following: "An unexpected, strange famine took hold of Mecca. Abu-Talib, the Prophet's uncle, had a large family to support with his meager resources. The noble Messenger and another uncle, al-Abbas, whose financial condition was better as compared to that of Abu-Talib, discussed this matter and decided that each one of them should take over the custody of one of Abu-Talib's children until the betterment of his financial conditions. Al-Abbas took Jaʿfar and the Holy Prophet (s) took Ali to their respective homes to ease the financial burden of Abu-Talib. Ali was taken under the complete guardianship of the noble Messenger (s) and he fully learnt the moral ethics and human virtues from him under his direct supervision."

Imam Ali (ʿa) also described this special guardianship thus: "Like a camel's child who follows its mother, I followed the noble Messenger; every day, he taught me one of his own moral virtues and ordered me to practice it."

Imam Ali in the Cave of Hira'

The Holy Prophet (s) used to go for one complete month to the Cave of Hira' every year. At the end of the month, he would descend from the mountain, go to the Holy Kaʿbah and, after circumambulating seven times, return home. The noble Messenger took Imam Ali (ʿa) with him to that strange place of worship. Traditions indicate that since the day the Holy Prophet (s) took Imam Ali (ʿa) to his own home, he never left him alone. Researchers write: "Ali (ʿa) was always present with the Holy Prophet (s). Whenever he went outside the city, mountain or plain, he took Ali (ʿa) along with him."

Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, a master scholar and author, writes: "Authentic traditions confirm that when the Angel Gabriel informed the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s) of his appointment as prophet, Ali was standing next to him. That day was among the scheduled days of the month when the Holy Prophet (s) went to the cave."

Imam Ali (ʿa) himself said: "The noble Messenger performed worship in Cave Hira′ every year and no one saw him except me."

Imam Ali's spiritual purification and continuous supervision by the Holy Prophet (s) resulted in his possessing a sensitive heart, piercing eyes and heedful airs; so, he was able to see things and hear sounds that were not possible for ordinary persons to hear, as has been explained by Imam Ali (ʿa) in his own words as follows: "During my childhood, when I sat beside the noble Messenger inside Cave Hira', I witnessed the descent of revelation and prophethood on him and could smell the holy fragrance of prophethood in him."

Imam al-Sadiq (ʿa) has narrated: "The Commander of the Faithful (ʿa), before the prophethood of the Holy Prophet of Islam (s) witnessed the illumination of prophethood and the voice of the Angel of Revelation. On the occasion of the explicit revelation, the Holy Prophet (s) said to Imam Ali (ʿa): 'If I wasn't the last Prophet, you possess the noble ability of being a prophet, but you are my vicegerent and inheritor and you are the lord of the all the vicegerents and pious.'

The Commander of the Faithful (ʿa), on hearing voices from the unseen, said: "On the descent of revelation upon the noble Messenger, I heard sad cries. I asked the Prophet of God (s), 'What do these sad cries denote?' 'These are the cries of Satan who is crying, because his hope for being worshipped upon the earth has vanished completely after my prophetic mission.' Then he turned his face towards me and said: 'What ever is heard and seen by me is also heard and seen by you, except that you aren't a prophet but my vicegerent and helper.'"

THE LIFE OF IMAM ALI
BEFORE PROPHETHOOD

FIRST PERSON TO ACCEPT ISLAM

The second part of Imam Ali's life consists of the period after the Holy Prophet Muhammad's Prophethood and before his immigration. This period was of twelve years, and throughout this period, he served the noble Messenger and was responsible for important assignments. During this period, he was awarded a series of distinctions that weren't awarded upon any one except Imam Ali ('a) during the entire history of Islam. The first merit was his being the forerunner in accepting Islam and his candid declaration of having always believed in Islam.(1)

It has been clearly mentioned in the Holy Quran that those who were vanguards in accepting Islam would also be considered foremost in attaining Divine pleasure and God's blessings.(2) The Holy Quran thus pays special attention to the matter of being foremost in Islam to the extent that those who accepted Islam and sacrificed their lives and personal assets before the conquest of Mecca are considered superior with respect to those who accepted Islam and participated in military campaigns after that.(3)

The conquest of Mecca was achieved in the eighth year after migration, eighteen years after prophethood. The reason for superiority of faith was that they believed in Islam when it hadn't yet achieved power and government in the Arabian Peninsula, and the garrison of idol-worshippers still existed as an invincible fortress which posed a great danger to the life and property of Muslims. Although the Muslims living in the vicinity of Medina were able to possess relative power and had been victorious during several armed encounters, but still the danger hadn't vanished completely.

When there was no power except the power of the Qurayshites (i.e. the people of Quraysh) and there was no manpower except the manpower of the enemies, accepting Islam was a thing of higher esteem and more worth. Therefore, being the vanguard of Islam in Mecca and among the helpers of the noble Messenger was most precious and a valuable distinction that couldn't be compared with any merit whatsoever. Umar, one day, asked al-

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(1) An explanation of this debate would be presented at the end of the discussion.

(2) The Holy Qur'an states: *"And the foremost in the race, the foremost in the race: those are they who would be brought nigh*. [56:10-11]"

(3). The Holy Qur'an declares: *"Those who spent and fought before the victory are not upon a level with the rest of you. They are greater in rank than those who spent and fought afterwards* [57:10]."

Khabbab, the sixth pioneer of Islam, who was severely tortured by the polytheists of Mecca, "How did the polytheists of Mecca treat you?"

In reply, the man removed his clothing from his back to show the scars of torture and burns to Umar, and said, "Many times, they forcibly put on the coat of armor upon my body and left me under the burning sun of Mecca for several hours; sometimes, they ignited fire and threw me upon it, pulling me over it until fire was quenched."

The merit belongs to those individuals who endured all sorts of severe torture even at the cost of their lives and accepted Islam from the depth of their hearts and souls.

Imam Ali; the foremost to accept Islam

A majority of historians and narrators have written that the Holy Prophet (s) was appointed to prophethood on Monday and Imam Ali (ʿa) accepted Islam the very next day.(1) In a public gathering of his companions, the Holy Prophet (s) himself declared Imam Ali (ʿa) as the first man to have accepted Islam. He (s) said, "The first person who will meet me at the Stream of Kawthar in the Hereafter will be the forerunner among you in Islam; that is, Ali ibn Abi-Talib."

Traditions narrated from the Holy Prophet (s) and the Commander of the Faithful (ʿa) and our infallible Imams (ʿa), as well as historians and narrators concerning this, are too many to be comprised in this.(2)

For instance, Imam Ali (ʿa) himself said, "I am a slave of God, brother of the Prophet, and truthful man. This statement cannot be uttered by anyone besides me, except a malicious liar. I prayed with the noble Messenger seven years ahead of the people and was the first who offered prayers with him."

On another occasion, he (ʿa) declared, "On that day, Islam had no access except in the home of the Holy Prophet and Khadijah, and I was the third person of this family."

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(1) Al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak ala al-Sahihayn* 2/112; Ibn Abd al-Barr, *al-Istiʿab* 3/32.

(2) Allamah al-Amini has collected quotations and narrations from Islamic historians and narrators regarding Imam ʿ Ali (ʿ a) being the first to have believed in the Holy Prophet (s) in his encyclopedic book, *Mawsuʿat al-Ghadir*, pages 191-213. Interested persons may refer to this book for detailed information about this subject.

He also said, "O God! I am the pioneer who returned towards You, listened to Your message, accepted the invitation of Your Messenger; and before me, no one except God's Prophet offered prayers."

Narration of Afif al-Kindi

ʿAfif al-Kindi narrated: "One day, I entered Mecca to buy some perfume and clothing and sat down next to al-Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib in the Sacred Mosque. When the sun rose to its height, I saw a man come and look towards the sky and then stand facing the Kaʿbah. A youth accompanied him and stood at his right side, and then a lady entered the Mosque and stood behind those two. Then all three congregated to offer prayer. I was astonished to see that among the idol-worshippers of Mecca, three people had separated themselves from the society and were worshipping a God other than the gods of the people of Mecca. I looked towards al-Abbas, and he said, 'It is something great!' He repeated the same words and asked me, 'Do you know who these three people are?' I replied, 'No.' He said, 'The first person who came and stood ahead of the two others is my nephew Muhammad the son of Abdullah, the second person is also another nephew Ali the son of Abu-Talib, and the third among them is Muhammad's wife. He claims that his religion has been revealed to him by God Almighty, and until now, under this heavenly sky, none except these three believe in this religion.'"

If Imam Ali (ʿa) was the first person who believed in him after prophethood, what was Ali's situation before that? What is meant by belief is the same old faith with which Ali's soul was saturated before the prophethood was made official, and he was never separated from it even for a moment. Before the continuous, fruitful guidance of the Holy Prophet (s) and roots of belief in the Unity of God, were perfectly instilled in the depths of his soul. When the Holy Prophet (s) was officially appointed as Prophet, he firmly declared his earlier belief and, immediately, became his follower.

In the Holy Quran, faith and Islam are described as practicing and declaring one's belief respectively. For example, when God Almighty commanded Prophet Abraham (ʿa) to accept Islam, he replied by uttering, "*I surrender myself in front of the Lord of the Worlds.* [2:131]" In the Holy Quran too, the Prophet of Islam (s) said, "*I am commanded to surrender to the Lord of the Worlds.* [40:66]"

The objective of Islam in these cases means surrender and an open declaration of the belief that has been implanted in the soul of a person. It

is not the primary level of faith. The Prophet of Islam (s), even before the revelation of this verse and the prophethood, had always been a monotheist. Thus, faith has two meanings:

1. Initial inclination towards Islam, which was the type of faith possessed by many of the companions and helpers of the Prophet (s).

2. Declaration of esoteric faith that has already been implanted in the soul of a person.

The acceptance of faith by Imam Ali (ʿa) on the second day of prophethood means this and nothing else.

Debate of al-Ma'mun, the Abbasid ruler, with Ishaq

Al-Ma'mun, due to political considerations or perhaps due to his own belief towards Shiʿism, pretended to accept the superiority of Imam Ali (ʿa). One day, in an intellectual conference of forty eminent scholars of that age, including Ishaq, he looked towards them and asked, "What was the best deed the day God's Prophet (s) was appointed to the prophethood?"

Ishaq answered, "Belief in God and the prophethood of His Prophet (s)."

He further asked, "Wasn't being foremost in Islam the best deed?"

Ishaq answered, "Why not? we read in the Holy Quran: '*And the foremost in the race, the foremost in the race: Those are they who will be brought nigh*.' This means being foremost in the acceptance of Islam."

The ruler asked, "Was there any body who took lead over Ali in acceptance of Islam, or Ali was the pioneer among men who believed in the Prophet?"

Ishaq answered, "Ali was the first person who believed in the Prophet's religion, but the day he believed, he wasn't more than a child; therefore, such an Islam couldn't be regarded as having distinction. But Abu-Bakr was a grown-up man when he joined lines of God's worshippers, even though he accepted Islam later on; therefore, his faith and belief at his age has a special distinction."

Al-Ma'mun asked, "How did Ali accept Islam? Was he invited by the Prophet to accept Islam or God revealed it to him to accept the principle of monotheism and Islamic codes?"

Ishaq said, "Never can it be said that Ali's Islam was due to God's revelation, because the prerequisite of this assumption would imply that his belief had superiority over the Prophet's Islam. The acceptance of faith of the Prophet was due to revelation and guidance through the Angel Gabriel and not due to direct revelation from God Almighty."

Al-Ma'mun concluded, "So, if the faith of Ali came on being invited by the Prophet, did the Prophet act on his own or was it due to the command of God? Never could it be said that the Holy Prophet (s) invited Ali to accept Islam without God's command, and certainly, it must be said that the Prophet's invitation to Ali to accept Islam was extended due to God's command. Did the All-wise God command the Prophet to invite him towards Islam when he was only a child susceptible to change? Further, is belief and unbelief the same? Therefore, it should be said that the intelligence and intuition of Ali, even in childhood, was of a level that his faith was equivalent to the faith of the elders."

However, al-Ma'mun could have given a better answer. The most suitable reply to those who possess more comprehensive information of *wilayah* in the sense of succession to the Holy Prophet, and Imamate in the sense of spiritual leadership can be summarized as follows:

Never should God's saintly personalities be seen as ordinary persons, nor their childhood and nourishment durations be considered like that of other ordinary children. Even their intelligence and intuition should not be considered like that of others. Among the divine messengers, there were some who were given the highest levels of intelligence and understanding during their childhood and God Almighty taught them wisdom and divine knowledge. The Holy Quran has stated about Prophet John (ʿa): "*O John! Hold fast to the Scripture. And we gave him wisdom when a child.* [29:12]"

Jesus Christ (ʿa) spoke on the first day of his birth by the command of God: "*Lo! I am the slave of God. He hath given me the scripture and hath appointed me as a prophet.* [29:30]"

We read that the infallible Imams, during their childhood, were able to answer the most complex intellectual, philosophical and jurisprudential questions.(1) The acts of righteous saints shouldn't be compared with our own deeds, nor the criteria of understanding and learning of our children be regarded as a measure of the intelligence and insight of the childhood of God's prophets and saints.(2)

(1) For example, the complex questions that Abu-Hanifah asked Imam al-Kazim (ʿa) and Yahya ibn Aktham asked Imam al-Jawad (ʿa) and the satisfying answers given to them have been registered in books of narrations and history.

(2). Imam ʿAli, the Commander of the Faithful (ʿa), stated: "No individuals of this community can compete with the family and children of the Prophet of Islam." *Nahj al-Balaghah,* sermon 2.

THE PROHIBITION TO SPREAD IMAM ALI'S VIRTUES

The history of human civilization rarely finds any personality like Imam Ali (ʿa), where the friends and enemies together join hands to hide and cover up his exalted distinctions and sublime virtues; nevertheless, writings and narrations about his great kindness and excellent qualities have filled the world. Enemies did it because of jealousy; and the friends, who loved him, under continuous threat of tortures and executions, had no alternative except to keep their lips tightly closed, and not proclaim any positive quality possessed by him.

The brazen efforts of the Umayyad dynasty to cover up the exalted virtues and distinctions of the progeny of the Holy Prophet (s) are unforgivable. Anyone could be accused of friendship with Imam Ali (ʿa); any two vagabonds of the shameful regime could testify about this friendship and, their names would be removed from the list of government service employees, and their income from the public treasury, terminated. Muʿawiyah, in one his official orders to governors and commanders, addressed them thus: "If proved that a certain person is a friend of Ali and his family, delete his name from the lists of government employees and terminate his salary, and deprive him from all sorts of benefits."

In another of his official orders, he went further, and strictly ordered them to cut off the ears and nose and destroy the dwellings of those who showed friendship towards Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. As a result of such brutal orders, the Iraqis, especially the people of Kufa,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** got so scared of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s underground secret agents, that they never told any of their secrets to their own friends, until and unless they took an oath from them not to reveal their secrets.(1)

Al-Iskafi, in his book *Naqd al-Uthmaniyyah*, writes as follows: "The Umayyad and Abbasid regimes were so sensitive with respect to the virtues and distinctions of Ali, and in order to prevent their publication, called jurisprudents, judges, and historians and ordered them strictly not to open their tongues to quote any narration about Ali's virtues. Therefore, a group of narrators could not quote distinctions of Imam Ali directly; so they wrote that a man from Quraysh performed such an act!"

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(1) Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* 11/44-45.

Muʿawiyah, for the third time, wrote to his own provincial political representatives in the lands of the Muslims not to accept the testimony of a partisan of Ali in any case! However, such strict restrictions couldn't prevent the spreading of the virtues of Imam Ali and his family. Muʿawiyah wrote for the fourth time to his current governors, as follows: "Pay respect to all those who narrate virtues and distinctions of Uthman ibn Affan, and send their names and addresses to me, so that I can compensate their services by giving them large sums of bonuses."

Such an attractive promise resulted in the fabrication of false narrations about the virtues and distinctions of Uthman; and this act became heated in all cities, and fabricators of lies about the virtues of the third caliph were able to make a large fortune. This situation reached such a point that Muʿawiyah himself become tired and ordered narrators to narrate the virtues of the first and second caliphs and other *Companions*, and in case a historian quoted a distinction for Abu-Turab (Imam Ali), they should fabricate a similar narration about the other companions of the Prophet and publish them immediately, because this would be more effective in trampling the arguments of the followers of Ali.(1)

Marwan ibn al-Hakam was the one who used to say that the defense which Ali did for Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** couldn't be compared with the defense of any one else, nevertheless damnation of Imam Ali (ʿa) was the incantation of his tongue. When he was criticized for believing in Ali's excellence, yet cursing him, he said: "The foundations of my government would never be strong and dependable without trampling on Ali's excellence and continuing his cursing." In spite of their belief in the righteousness of Imam Ali (ʿa) and his sons, they used to curse him in order to preserve their positions and privileges.

Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz, an Umayyad ruler, said, "My father was the governor of Medina and was regarded as one of the most eloquent and famous orators who delivered Friday Prayer sermons. But in accordance with the orders issued from the government of Syria, he was forced to curse Ali and his family. When he started to curse, he began to stutter, his face changed color and he used to encounter discontinuity in his speech. I asked him what the reason was. He replied: What I know about Ali, if others, too, knew, they would have faced my problem. In spite of knowing Ali's exalted distinctions, I am forced to curse him to secure the position of the family of Marwan."

(1) *Ibid*. 3/15.

The hearts of the Umayyad authorities were full of grudge and hatred for Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. When a group of well-wishers advised Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to stop this act, he replied, "I would continue this act to such an extent that our children would become old with these thoughts and our elders would die in this condition!"

Cursing Imam Ali (ʿa) from pulpits to congregations, in lectures to historians and preachers attached to Muʿawiyah's organization, continued for a period of sixty years. And it was so effective that one day al-Hajjaj, an Umayyad ruler of Iraq, lost his temper upon a man and treated him harshly; the person who belonged to the Azd tribe turned his face to al-Hajjaj and said, "Emir! Do not behave in this manner with me, because we possess some superiority and distinctions."

Al-Hajjaj asked him about those things, and he replied, "One of our distinctions is that if someone wants to establish family ties with us, the first thing we ask him is whether he loves Abu-Turab (Imam Ali) or not! If he shows the least inclination towards him, we do not establish family ties with him. In my clan, the enmity and grudge against Ali's family is to the extent that no man can be found named al-Hasan or al-Husayn and there is no daughter named Fatimah. If one my tribesmen is asked to show hatred towards Ali, he will show it towards his children as well."

Cursing Imam ʿ Ali (ʿ a) had taken root in the hearts of all young and old. Some considered it a recommended act, while others a moral act. The day Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz decided to wash this shameful spot from the bosom of the Islamic society, cries were raised by those who were nurtured in the Umayyad school of thought, saying, "The caliph wants to destroy the Islamic traditions!" Notwithstanding all those endeavors, Islamic history witnessed that all the plans and plots of the Umayyad rulers ended up like tracing a design on water, and even produced completely opposite results. The shining sun of Imam Ali (ʿa) spread its brightness all over the universe in spite of the preachers associated with the Umayyad authorities.

Continuous persistence and denial by enemies did not produce any dent in the love for Imam Ali (ʿa) in the awakened hearts. Instead, it resulted in extensive research conducted about him to judge his noble personality without the political propaganda, to the extent that Amir ibn Abdullah, the grandson of Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr, advised him to stop the cursing of Imam Ali (ʿa), because the Umayyad authorities cursed him for a sixty years but could not get any result except elevating the position and

distinctions of Imam Ali (ʿa) and inclining all awakening hearts towards him.(1)

Lone Vanguard

This enmity was not limited to the Umayyad rulers; rather, this perfect human being has been under constant attacks by enemies and malicious individuals. Fourteen centuries have passed since the beginning of Islam, but some people who imagine themselves to be intellectuals, freedom-seekers and leaders of new generations accomplish the Umayyad goals with their poisoned pens by hiding the noble virtues of Imam Ali (ʿa). Here is an explicit example: God's revelation for the first time descended upon the Holy Prophet's heart in Cave Hira' and bestowed upon him the position of divine prophethood. The Angel of Revelation made him aware of his assignment as Prophet, but the exact period of its public declaration was not mentioned. The Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** did not extend the general invitation to all people for three years and limited himself only to a small group of specifically selected individuals through personal meetings. Then, God's command came to him to extend an open invitation to his own clan and relatives: "*And warn the tribe of your near kindred, and lower thy wings (in kindness) unto those believers who follow thee. And if they (thy kinsfolk) disobey thee, say: Lo I am innocent of what they do.* [26:214-6]"

The reason why kinsfolk were invited first was that unless the near relatives of a spiritual or social leader believe in his faith and obey him, his invitation shall never be effective upon outsiders. Near relatives know his defects, secrets and virtues; therefore, their belief in his prophethood would be an indication of his truthfulness. Likewise, their opposition against his belief would be an indication of his being a liar. The Holy Prophet (s) ordered Imam Ali (ʿa) to invite forty five most distinguished and elderly personalities from the clan of Banu-Hashim to his home and prepare a dinner of meat and milk for them.

The entire group showed up at the house of the Holy Prophet (s). Abu-Lahab, uncle of the Prophet, sarcastically commented on the gathering before they were ready to hear what the Prophet (s) had to say and departed, taking some of the others with him. The Holy Prophet (s) decided to arrange another meeting for dinner at his house the very next day and invite every one except Abu-Lahab. Imam Ali (ʿa) again prepared food

(1) Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* 13/221.

consisting of meat and milk and invited the Banu-Hashim clan to the Prophet's house for lunch and listen to his speech. All the guests appeared at the right time; and after lunch, the Prophet started to speak: "Verily, the guide of people never lies to them. If I would like to lie at any time to others, I would certainly never lie to you; and if I would like to cheat others, I would certainly never do it to you. I swear by God Almighty except Whom there is no god, that I am His messenger to you and to all peoples of the world. Be aware that you will die the way you sleep and be raised alive the way you are awake. The righteous will be rewarded for their righteous deeds; the wicked ones will be punished for their sins; eternal paradise is for the righteous ones and eternal hell for the wicked ones. Nobody has brought a better message for you as compared to me. I have brought for you prosperity in this world and the Hereafter. My God has commanded me to invite you to His unity and my prophethood. Is there any one among you who will help me on this path so that he becomes my brother, vicegerent and deputy?"

He uttered this sentence and paused for a few moments to see who would give a positive reply to his invitation. A strange silence mixed with amazement and bewilderment overtook the assembly and all of them sat, with heads hung down, lost in deep thought. Suddenly, Imam Ali (ʿa), not more than fifteen years old, stood up, broke the deep silence, and said to the Holy Prophet (s), "O Prophet of God! I will help you on this path."

Then he stretched his hand towards the Prophet to press it as a sign of making allegiance.

The Holy Prophet (s) ordered Ali (ʿa) to sit down and once again repeated his question. Again, Ali (ʿa) stood up and declared his readiness. This time, again he was told by Prophet (s) to sit down. The third time, no one responded except Ali (ʿa), and he stood up and declared his support to back the sacred goal of the Prophet of Islam. At this moment, the Holy Prophet (s) put his hand upon Ali's hand in the assembly of the elders of Banu-Hashim and said, "Yes! O my bondsman and kinsfolk, know that Ali is my brother, vicegerent and my deputy among you."

In accordance with the quotation of the tradition of al-Halabi, the Holy Prophet (s) also added the following two sentences: "And he is my vizier and inheritor, too."

In this manner, the first vicegerent in Islam was appointed by the last divine ambassador at the beginning of his prophethood, when no one believed in his message except a small number of people. The reason why

the Holy Prophet (s) declared his own prophethood and the divinely appointed leadership of Imam Ali (ʿa) simultaneously, on the same day, was to emphasize the position of spiritual leadership explicitly, and let it be known that these two positions are not separate from each other; the position of Imamate is complimentary to the completion of Prophethood.

Records of the historical announcement

This historical announcement has been narrated by a group of historians(1) and Quranic exegetes, Shiite and non-Shiite, who, without any criticism about its text, consider it as evidence of the exalted position of Imam Ali (ʿa). Among this group, only one writer of the Sunnis—Ibn Taymiyah al-Dimashqi, whose style and method of writing against the distinctions and virtues of the Prophet's family is very explicit and recorded, which the books of traditions have rejected as unauthentic—regards this narration as unknown and unauthentic even though its continuity has been proved, because of his special attitude to the Imam's family.

On the basis of the footnotes of *Tarikh al-Kamil* written by his teacher, whose name is not mentioned, Ibn Taymiyah quotes from his teacher that he has regarded this event as unauthentic. It means that either his teacher was influenced by Ibn Taymiyah's thoughts or, because he has diagnosed this announcement against the caliphate of the previous three caliphs, he has rejected it intentionally as unauthentic. Then, he himself justifies this tradition in a strange manner, saying that vicegerency of Imam Ali (ʿa) at the beginning of Islam does not have any contradiction with the later caliphate of Abu-Bakr, because on that day there was no Muslim other than Imam Ali (ʿa) who could become the vicegerent of the Prophet (s)!

Debate and argument with such people is futile; however, I am critical of those who have narrated this tradition in some of their books in detail, while at other places briefly and ambiguously, which is really a sort of concealment of the truth, or, the person has mentioned this tradition in the first edition of his book and deleted it in subsequent editions due to pressure of environment. Here it must be said that aggression upon the right of Imam Ali (ʿa) that started with the sad passing away of the Holy Prophet (s) is still continuing.

Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari, one of the great Islamic historians, in his book he has mentioned this historical distinction together with an

(1) Refer to exegetical notes on verse 214 of Surah al-Shuʿara, no. 26.

authentic document,[1] but when he reaches the verse: *"And warn the tribe of near kindred,"* in his commentary, he describes it vaguely and ambiguously so that it could not prove anything except his prejudice. As described earlier, the Holy Prophet (s), after the meal, asked the people present in the assembly, "Is there any one who will be my brother, vicegerent and caliph?"

Al-Tabari has narrated this question as follows: "Who is going to be my brother... etc?" Why he has deleted the two clear words: *vicegerent and caliph* and made the sentence ambiguous does not mean anything except his prejudice to preservation of his position and opportunity with the caliphs. He changed not only the question asked by the Prophet (ʿa) but also the second part of tradition, when the Holy Prophet (s) said to Imam Ali (ʿa): "You are my brother, vicegerent and caliph." So, he presented it in the same manner by erasing the two words: *vicegerent and caliph* – which clearly testifies to Imam Ali's direct succession to the Holy Prophet (s) without any gap. He has used an ambiguous and vague expression like: *etc*. Ibn Kathir al-Shami, who regards his history on the basis of the history of al-Tabari, on encountering this document, suddenly releases it, but follows al-Tabari's style in his commentary and, like him, resorts to ambiguity and vagueness.

The worst among all is the deviation that has been made by one of the intellectuals of our time, a famous writer from Egypt, Dr. Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal in his book: *The Life of Muhammad*, and inflicted a severe blow to the value of his own book. Firstly, about two sensitive sentences uttered by the Holy Prophet (s) at the end of the invitation, he has narrated only the question but omitted the second sentence: *"You are my brother, vicegerent and caliph."* Secondly, in the second and third prints of the book, he has deleted the entire narration. It appears that prejudiced individuals condemned him for narrating the first portion and forced him to inflict another tragic blow to the credibility of his book.

Al-Iskafi, in his famous book, narrated the following: Those who say that the faith of Imam Ali (ʿa) was expressed during childhood, duration in which a child cannot differentiate correctly between his good and bad, what do they say about this historical announcement? Did the Holy Prophet (s)

(1) This historical distinction has been narrated in the following books: al-Tabari, *Tarikh al-Umam wa'l-Muluk* 2/216; al-Tabari, *Tafsir* 19/74; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh* 2/24; al-Qadi Ayyad, *Sharh al-Shifa'* 3/37; al-Halabi, *al-Sirah al-Halabiyyah* 1/321. This narration has also been written by the pioneers of narrations and history in different manners which are not mentioned here.

assign the responsibility of preparing food for a large group on the shoulders of a child? And did he order the small child to invite his clan? Is it correct that the Holy Prophet (s) put his hand upon the hand of a minor child and introduced him as his brother, vicegerent and representative among the people?

The answer is an absolute no. Instead, it must be said that Ali ('a) on that day had reached such a limit in physical and intellectual development that he deserved the responsibility of executing all of these tasks. This child was never emotionally attached to other children; he did not enter their circle and play games with them. Instead, since the moment he stretched his hand towards God's messenger to serve and self-sacrifice, he continuously endeavored to blend his character with his, and was the most sincere devotee of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** in all affairs of his life.

Not only was he the first in that assembly to declare his belief in the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, but when the chiefs of the Quraysh tribe asked the Prophet (s) to show a miracle in order to prove his truthfulness and being connected with God (He should order the tree to uproot itself from its place and move to stand in front of them), Ali was the only one who declared his faith in spite of their refusal.

The Commander of the faithful ('a) has described this event in one of his sermons as follows: "The Holy Prophet said to them, 'If God does that, will you believe in His unity and my Prophethood?' All of them replied, 'Yes.' At that moment, the Holy Prophet (s) prayed and God granted his prayer. The tree uprooted itself from its place and stood in front of him. Seeing this, the group demanding a miracle instead of believing in the Prophet (s), called him a magician. But I, who was standing next to him, looked at his face and said, 'O Prophet of God! I am the vanguard who has believed in your prophethood and admit that tree has done this act with the command of God in order to testify your prophethood and to show respect to your words.' At that juncture, my testimony angered them and they said, 'No one will believe in you except Ali.'"

THE UNIQUE SACRIFICE

The conduct and deeds of a person depend upon his belief and ideology. Self-sacrificing and valor indicate righteousness with faith. If the faith of a person reaches the point where he considers it to be superior to his life and wealth, he will not care about anything and will sacrifice his own existence for his issue. The Holy Quran reflects this reality in the following verse: "*The true believers are those who only believe in God and His messenger and afterwards doubt not, but strive with their wealth and lives for the cause of God. Such are the sincere.* [49:15]"

In the early years of the prophethood, Muslims suffered severe torture on the path of their cherished goal. What prevented their enemies from accepting the principle of monotheism was their deviated belief in raising the status of their gods, and their competing to keep their tribal privileges, class differences and inherited rivalries. This obstacle existed in Mecca and its surroundings until the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** conquered it through the power of the Muslim army.

The intense pressure of the polytheists of Quraysh resulted in the migration of a group of them to Abyssinia and another to Yathrib (lately, Medina)***Error! Bookmark not defined.***. In spite of the fact that the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** were being protected by the clan of Banu-Hashim and especially by Abu-Talib, Jaʿfar ibn Abi-Talib, accompanied by a few Muslims, had no other choice but to leave Mecca in the fifth year of the prophethood and migrate to Abyssinia and remain there until the seventh year of the migration; the year of Khaybar's victory.

The Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** lost his most powerful defendant, Abu-Talib, in the tenth year of prophethood in Mecca. Only few days had passed since the death of his great uncle that his most kind wife, Khadijah, **Error! Bookmark not defined.**who was never reluctant in sacrificing her life and wealth for the advancement of the cause of Islam, too passed away. With the passage of these two great defendants of Islam, intensity of oppression and pressure upon the Muslims in Mecca intensified significantly. In the thirteen year of prophethood, the chiefs of Quraysh decided to silence the voice of monotheism forever through assassinating the Holy Prophet (s) in a general meeting. The Holy Quran described these three plots in the following verse: "*And when those who*

disbelieved plotted against thee (O Muhammad) to wound thee fatally, or, to kill thee or, to drive thee forth; they plotted, but God (also) plotteth; and God is the best of plotters. [8:30]"**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

The chiefs of Quraysh decided to select one person from each tribe and then the selected group attack Muhammad's home together at midnight and kill him instantaneously. Thenceforth, the polytheists would not be bothered by his propagation, and his murder would be distributed among all the Arab tribes and the Banu-Hashim clan would not be able to avenge his blood nor demand the blood-money from all the tribes who had participated in spilling his blood. The Angel of Revelation informed the Prophet (s) about their ominous plot and conveyed God's command to leave Mecca and go to Medina as soon as possible. The planned night arrived; Mecca and the area of the Holy Prophet's home was in total darkness. The assigned hitmen from Quraysh approached the Prophet's home from all sides. The Prophet (s) found an opportunity and left home, pretending that he was still inside his house sleeping upon his bed.

To execute this plan, the Prophet (s) needed a devoted and self-sacrificing person to lie upon his bed and cover himself under the green bed sheet, so that people who had plotted his murder should imagine that he was at home. This would keep them busy concentrating their eyes upon his house and not thinking about checking people in the alleys and streets of Mecca. But who would be ready to sacrifice his own life and lie upon Prophet's bed? This self-sacrificing person was the first person who believed in him before anybody else and since then circled around the candle of his existence like a moth. This deserving individual was no one except Imam Ali (ʿa) and this unique distinction was awarded to him.

The Prophet (s) turned his face towards Ali (ʿa) and said, "The polytheists of Quraysh have planned to kill me by attacking my home together and murdering me in my bed. God has commanded me to quit Mecca. You are required to sleep on my bed tonight, covering yourself with my green bed sheet, so that they think that I am still sleeping on my bed and do not search for me outside my home."

Imam Ali (ʿa), obeying the Holy Prophet's orders, slept on the bed as soon as night fell. Forty killers surrounded the Prophet's home and watched the home from chinks of doors and thought that the Prophet (s) was sleeping upon his bed. All of them were alert and controlled the surroundings so that even the entrance of a tiny ant should not miss their sharp eyes. In spite of this intense watch, the Prophet (s) left home.

A majority of narrators think that the Holy Prophet (s) came out of the house reciting verses of Surah Ya-Sin,[1] broke the siege miraculously and passed through them, so that none of them saw him. This fact cannot be denied, because whenever God's expediency desires to rescue His messenger miraculously, nothing can prevent it. But the point that needs to be emphasized is that many indicators prove that God Almighty did not want to rescue His messenger through a miracle, because then Ali ('a) would not have to sleep on the Prophet's bed nor the Prophet (s) walk to Cave Thawr and later on continue his journey to Medina with a lot of difficulties.

Some narrators have said that the moment the Prophet (s) decided to quit the house, all of them were overtaken by a deep sleep and he left unseen because of their negligence. But this point of view seems quite far away from reality and a wise man would never believe that forty killers would take their assignment so lightly that all of them would fall asleep so easily! But as many others have written, it was quite possible that the Prophet (s) had already left home before the killers arrived.[2]

Those Qurayshite killers, while their hands were tightly grasped on handles of their swords, were waiting for the moment when all of them could attack the Prophet's house where the Divine Revelations were descended simultaneously and spill the Prophet's blood on his bed. First, the enemies decided to attack at midnight, but they changed their decision and ultimately agreed to enter the house in the early morning to execute their crime. The dark curtain of the night finally rolled over and the light of morning sheared the chaste of sky.

Holding naked swords in their hands, the killers, thrilled with joy, attacked simultaneously, knowing that they would soon accomplish their desired target. But when they neared the Prophet's bed, they found Imam Ali ('a) instead of him. This unexpected scene filled them with wrath and, glaring at Ali, they asked, "Where is Muhammad?" He replied coolly, "Did you hand him over to me that you are demanding him from me?" Wrathfully, they attacked Imam Ali ('a) and pulled him towards the Holy Mosque, but after retaining him for a while, they had no alternative except to free him. While their wrath choked their throats, they decided to find the Holy Prophet (s).[3] God Almighty has praised this exalted bravery of Imam Ali

(1) Verses 8 & 9.

(2) Al-Halabi, *al-Sirah al-Halabiyyah*, 2/32.

(3). *Tarikh al-Tabari* 2/97.

(ʿa) in the following verse and placed him among those who hurry to attain His pleasure, holding their lives in the palm of their hands: "*And of mankind is he who sells himself, seeking the pleasure of God; and God hath compensation for (His) bondsman.* [2:207]"

Criminal agent of the Umayyad authorities

Almost, all exegetes of the Holy Quran confirm that this Quranic verse was revealed about Imam Ali (ʿa) on this occasion.(1) Yet, Samarah ibn Jundub– a well-known criminal of the Umayyad period–after receiving four hundred Dirhams, denied this fact and announced in a public gathering that the verse was revealed about Abd al-Rahman ibn Muljam! Not only did he deny this fact but he also mentioned that another Quranic verse, which is about hypocrites, to have been revealed about Imam Ali (ʿa): "*And of mankind there is he whose conversation on the life of this word pleaseth thee (Muhammad), and he calleth God to witness as to that which is in his heart; yet he is the most rigid of opponents.* [2:204]"

Such a deviation is not unexpected from such a wretched person. During the governorship of Ziyad in Iraq, he was appointed as the governor of Basra and because of his enmity towards the Holy Prophet's family, he killed eight thousands people because of their believing in Imam Ali (ʿa) as the legal successor to the Holy Prophet (s). When Ziyad investigated this horrible crime and asked him how he dared to kill so many people without realizing there might have been innocent individuals among them, he replied with utmost impudence, "I would never have been scared to kill even twice that number!"(2)

The details of Samarah's shameful deeds are beyond the scope of these pages. He is the same person who did not obey the Holy Prophet (s) and take permission from people before entering their homes; for plucking the dates from his palm tree that was located inside other's home. He even rejected the Prophet's offer to sell the tree to him at a manifold price; rather, he insist that he would never seek permission from the people living inside that home. Witnessing his rude behavior, the Holy Prophet (s)

(1) A list of most reliable reference books that mentioned this Quranic verse to have been occasioned at Imam ʿ Ali's self-sacrifice for the Holy Prophet (s) is mentioned by Sayyid al-Bahrani in his famous *tafsir* book, entitled *al-Burhan* 1/206-207 and al-Balaghi's *tafsir* book, entitled *'Ala' al-Rahman* 1/184-185. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, in *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* 13/262, records: "Commentators have narrated the descent of this verse about Imam Ali (ʿa)."

(2) *Tarikh al-Tabari.*

ordered the home owner to cut his tree and throw it away. He told Samarah, "You are a harmful person, and Islam does not permit any one to harm others."

Such deviations made a small dent upon some simple-minded persons, but with passage of time, prejudices were finally rolled over. Researchers were able to abstract truth out of ambiguities, and commentators and narrators testified that the revelation of these verses were about Imam Ali (ʿa). This historical incident is a proof that the people of Syria were so influenced by the Umayyad propaganda that whatever they heard from preachers of that institution, they considered all of it as if written on a divine tablet. The fact that Syrians were completely ignorant about Islamic history is proved here because at the time of revelation of this verse, Abd al-Rahman ibn Muljam was not born, or he had not entered the surroundings of Hijaz and seen the Prophet (s), so the verse could not be revealed about him.

Unjust Prejudices

Al-Jahiz, a famous Sunni intellectual writes: "Sleeping of Ali on the Prophet's bed cannot be regarded as an act of great obedience and privilege, because the Prophet had already assured him that no harm would come to him if he slept in his place."

After him, Ibn Taymiyah(1) added: "Ali was aware that he would not be killed, because the Prophet had already told him that he was assigned to announce publicly the next day, from a specific place in Mecca, that whoever had deposited a thing as a trust with Muhammad (s) could come and pick up his deposit. Ali, because of this task assigned to him by the Prophet (s), was very well aware that if he would sleep in Prophet's bed, no harm would come to him."

Reply: Before analyzing this issue, it is important to emphasize the point that al-Jahiz, Ibn Taymiyah and their followers, who are famous for their cruelty against the Holy Prophet's family have unintentionally testified a greater privilege for Imam Ali (ʿa), who was assigned by the Holy Prophet (s) to sleep in his bed, because his faith was not like that of ordinary people; he possessed an extraordinary belief in the Prophet's words. It cannot be said that Imam Ali (ʿa) had absolute knowledge about his safety.

(1) Ibn Taymiyah, because of his opposition with Muslim scholars and the belief that he had about the intercession and the visitations to graves, was boycotted by contemporary scholars and ultimately died in the year 728 A.H. in the prison of Damascus.

Whenever the faith of a person reaches the level that he considers whatever he hears from the Holy Prophet (s) as true, then, if the Prophet tells him that no harm would come to him, he sleeps in his bad with such tranquility and restfulness that he does not even imagine the possibility of the slightest risk. Then, who can be regarded equal to such an exalted distinction? Let us turn the pages of history.

So far, our argument was based on the assumption that Holy Prophet (s) told Imam Ali (ʿa) that he would not be killed, but if we refer to the history, we find that the matter is not the way as it has been imagined by the followers of al-Jahiz, and Ibn Taymiyah. All narrators have narrated the occasion differently from the way it has been described by these two, such as al-Waqidi, al-Miqrizi, Ibn Hisham and al-Tabari, as well as many others. Accordingly, it is not absolutely certain that the Holy Prophet (s) mentioned this matter on the very first night, since Shiite scholars and some Sunni narrators have narrated it quite differently. Here is another explanation: The famous Shiite intellectual Shaykh al-Tusi in his book, *al-Amali*, has written about the incident of the immigration that resulted in the protection of the Prophet as follows: "Ultimately, the night of migration ended, and Ali (ʿa) was aware of the hiding place of the Holy Prophet (s), and to facilitate provisions for the journey, it was required that he should meet him at night."

The Holy Prophet (s) spent three nights at Cave Thawr. During one of these nights, Imam Ali (ʿa) went to the cave to meet the Holy Prophet (s) with Hind ibn Abi-Halah, the son of Khadijah. The Prophet (s) gave the following orders to Ali (ʿa):

1. Arrange two camels for me and my companion. At this point, Abu-Bakr said, "I have already arranged two camels for this purpose." The Prophet (s) replied, "I will accept these two camels from you on condition that I pay their price," and then asked Ali to pay the price of both camels.

2. I am the trustee of the people of Quraysh, and I currently have their deposits in my home. Tomorrow, you must announce loudly from a prominent place in Mecca that whoever has his deposits with Muhammad should come and collect it.

3. After returning the deposits, make preparations for the migration. Whenever you receive my letter, start your journey with my daughter Fatimah, your mother Fatimah, and Fatimah the daughter of al- al-Zubayr ibn Abd al-Muttalib. If someone else from Banu-Hashim requests you for the migration, please make relevant arrangements for them accordingly.

Then, he added: “From now on, any danger waiting for you in ambush has been removed and no harm will be inflicted upon you.”

This sentence is exactly the same that Ibn Hisham**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and al-Tabari have mentioned in their books. Therefore, if the Prophet assured Ali of immunity against any harm, it came in later nights and not on the night of migration, and if he ordered Ali to return the deposits of the people, it was done on the second or third night. If some Sunni narrators have narrated that the Holy Prophet (s) assured ʿ Ali of immunity from harm on the same night and gave instructions to return deposits, it can be regarded as feasible. It could be possible that their intentions could have been to narrate the main issue without paying significant attention to details of place and time. Al-Halabi, in *al-Sirah* 2/63-7, has written as follows: “During one of the nights when the Holy Prophet (s) was hiding in Cave Thawr, Imam Ali (ʿa) succeeded in meeting him. On that night, the Holy Prophet (s) ordered Imam Ali (ʿa) to return the deposits of the people and to pay his debts.”

He quotes from the author of *al-Durr al-Manthur* 3/180 that Imam Ali (ʿa) met Holy Prophet (s) after the night of migration.

Two Shining Witnesses about Imam’s Sacrifice

Two historical events clearly testify that the act of Imam Ali (ʿa) that night was nothing but self-sacrificing and he was indeed prepared to be martyred for the sake of God Almighty.

1. The poetic verses composed by Imam Ali (ʿa) about this historical episode, narrated by al-Suyuti in his book of *tafsir* 3/180, clearly prove the Imam’s act of self sacrifice:

I placed my soul as vanguard for most righteous person on earth,
*Who has circumnutated the House of Lord and Hijr of Ishmael**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.*
That noble person was Muhammad, while pagans plotted the attack,
But my God protected him against the plots of his enemies.
While I was lying on his bed during the night waiting for their attack,
I had prepared myself for death and imprisonment.

2. Both Shiah and Sunni scholars have narrated that God Almighty on that night addressed His two great angles, Gabriel and Michael, thus: “If I decide death for one of you and life for another one, who is ready among you to accept death and give his life to his companion?” At that critical juncture, no one was ready to accept death and sacrifice his own life for the

sake of his companion. Then, God Almighty addressed those two angles and said, “Descend towards the earth and see how Ali has purchased death and has sacrificed himself for the Prophet; then both of you protect Ali from the danger of enemies.”(1)

If due to the passage of time, a curtain has been rolled over the eyes of some, this act of Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was regarded as the greatest sacrifice in the eyes of friends and enemies at the beginning of Islam. In the council of six individuals formed by Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** for the designation of caliph, Ali (ʿa), by describing this exalted distinction, protested with the members of the council and said, “I ask you, members of the council, to swear in the Name of God if there was any one other than me who took food for the Prophet in Cave Thawr? Was there any one else who slept in his bed to protect him from the danger?” All of them replied, “By God, there was none except you.”

Sayyid Ibn Tawus has an interesting analysis about the sacrifice of Imam Ali (ʿa), and by**Error! Bookmark not defined.** comparing it to the sacrifice and surrender of Ishmael before his father, proves the superiority of Imam Ali’s sacrifice.(2)

(1) Al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar* 19/39, as quoted from al-Ghazzali, *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*.

(2) Shaykh al-Saduq, *Iqbal al-A'mal*, page 593; al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar* 19/98.

THE LIFE OF IMAM ALI
AFTER MIGRATION AND BEFORE THE PROPHET'S PASSING AWAY

SUMMARY OF THIS PERIOD

The third part of Imam Ali's life begins**Error! Bookmark not defined.** after the migration of the Holy Prophet (s) from Mecca to Medina. The important and sensitive deeds of the Imam (ʿa) in this chapter of his life can be summarized as follows:

Devotion and Self-Sacrifice in the Battlefield

The Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** waged twenty seven wars against the polytheists, Jews, and rebels during his entire life in Medina. Muslim narrators have categorized those battles as military campaigns ***Error! Bookmark not defined.***in which the Holy Prophet (s) himself assumed leadership and supreme command of the army on the battlefield, personally moved with the soldiers and returned with them to Medina. In addition to these wars, fifty-five secret rapid expeditions were also executed by his orders.(1) The secret rapid expeditions were fought by an army of Muslim soldiers who went out from Medina to crush the plots of rebels, and the command was assigned to a celebrated and dignified individuals of the army. Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** participated in twenty six wars with the Holy Prophet (s), and not in the war of Tabuk.**Error! Bookmark not defined.** He was ordered by the Holy Prophet (s) to remain in Medina as his deputy because of the fear of mutiny by the hypocrites in the absence of the Holy Prophet (s). The number of rapid secret expeditions whose command was assigned to Imam Ali (ʿa) has not been calculated accurately, but details of some will be described in this chapter.

Collection and Writing of the Holy Quran

The writing of the Divine revelation, preparation of various historical and political documents, and writing letters of invitation, propagation, etc., were some sensitive and distinguished tasks that were assigned to Imam Ali (ʿa). He accurately compiled all the verses of the Holy Scripture and also documented whether they were revealed in Mecca or Medina. He was regarded as one of the most celebrated writers of the Divine revelation and guardian of the Holy Quran. His preparing for political and historical documents and propagation letters—the text of a large number of which

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(1) Al-Waqidi, in *al-Maghazi* 1/2, has mentioned the number as less than the above.

has been preserved in books of traditions and history—certifies his being a celebrated officer of the state. Even the historical peace treaty of al-Hudaybiyah was dictated by the Holy Prophet (s) and documented in Imam Ali's handwriting.

His academic and writing talents were not limited to them. He tried his best to preserve the Holy Prophet's work and traditions and succeeded in documenting his speeches regarding religious duties, obligations, incidents and forecasts. He compiled six precious books of whatever he had heard from the Holy Prophet (s). After his martyrdom, all those books were preserved by his progeny as the most valuable treasure of Islam, to respond to criticism by others and present them as authentic references from the Holy Prophet (s). Zurarah, one of the most celebrated students of Imam al-Sadiq (ʿa), saw some of these books and narrated their characteristic features.

Details of Imam ʿ Ali's Migration

After the migration of the Holy Prophet (s), Imam Ali (ʿa) waited for his letter, which Abu-Waqid al-Laythi brought after some days. The Holy Prophet (s) in his letter repeated whatever he had already verbally directed him to do in Cave Thawr on the third night of migration. He ordered him to move with the ladies of his family as well to improvise for people inclined to migrate. Imam Ali (ʿa) executed his orders exactly according to his instructions concerning the deposits of people and began to make relevant arrangements for the journey to Medina.

He sent a message to the group of believers who were ready to leave Mecca secretly, to move a few kilometers from Mecca and wait at a particular place known as Dhu-Tuwa till they were joined by his caravan. After issuing such a message of secretly moving to the others, Imam Ali (ʿa) prepared for his journey in broad daylight and mounted the ladies on the camel-litters with the help of Ayman, Ummu-Ayman's son, and said, "Let the camels move slowly, because the ladies do not have the capacity of riding at a fast speed."

Ibn Shahrashub writes: Al-Abbas learned about Imam Ali's decision to leave Mecca during the day in front of the enemies. He immediately arrived to see Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and said, "Muhammad (s) left Mecca secretly and the people of Quraysh closed all routes from Mecca to trace his footprints; how can you leave Mecca with the ladies in front of the enemies' eyes? Do you not know that they will prevent your movement?" Ali (ʿa) replied, "The night I met the Holy

Prophet (s) in the cave and he ordered me to migrate from Mecca together with the Hashemite ladies, he gave me the good news that, from now on, no harm would come to me. I trust in God Almighty and have firm belief in the Holy Prophet's words; and his path and my path is the same; therefore, I will leave Mecca in daylight in front of the eyes of the polytheists of Quraysh!" Then he recited some verses whose meanings were the same as already explained.

Once more, when al-Laythi assumed responsibility of guiding the camels and, in an effort to take the caravan swiftly away from the range of the arrows of the polytheists of Quraysh accelerated the speed of the camels, Imam Ali (ʿa) ordered him to slow down, saying, "The Holy Prophet (s) has told me that no harm would be inflicted upon me during this path." Then, he took over the responsibility of guiding the camels in his own hands and recited the following poetic verses whose meanings are as follows:

All affairs rest in the hands of God; therefore, try to prevent any sort of mistrust from entering into your mind, because the Lord of Worlds is Alone sufficient to fulfill your important needs.

Prosecution of Imam Ali by the polytheists of Quraysh

Imam Ali's caravan was near Dhabjanan**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, when suddenly seven masked riders appeared from a distance driving their horses swiftly towards the caravan. In order to avoid any harm inflicted upon the ladies, Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ordered al-Laythi and Ayman to make the camels sit and tie their feet. Then, he helped the ladies to step down from the camel litters and while this task was being accomplished, the masked riders with naked swords arrived upon his head. Their throats choking with severe wrath, they screamed, "Do you imagine that you can escape from our hands with these women? Turn back to Mecca from this route." Ali (ʿa) replied, "What will happen if I do it not?" They said, "We will force you or return with your head." Uttering these hard words, they approached the camels to force them to start moving again. At that moment, Imam Ali (ʿa), with his sword, prevented their advancement. One of them pulled his sword towards him, but Imam ʿ Ali (ʿ a) turned the man's sword away from him and, with a lightening attack, he pulled his sword towards one of them. His sword was about to strike his shoulder when suddenly his horse moved backward causing the Imam's sword to strike its back. Imam Ali (ʿa) spoke loudly, "I am going to Medina with no other aim than joining God's Prophet. Whoever wants his blood to be spilled and cut into pieces should dare to

approach me." Having uttered these words, he looked at Ayman and al-Laythi and ordered them to untie the feet of the camels and to continue their journey. The enemy realized that Imam Ali (ʿa) was ready to fight with them till death and saw with their own eyes that one of them was about to be killed; therefore, they changed their mind and started moving back towards Mecca. Imam Ali (ʿa) continued his journey towards Medina. Near Mount Dhabjanan, he rested for twenty four hours so that the others who had decided to migrate could join him. The people who joined Imam Ali (ʿa) and his companions included Ummu-Ayman, the pious lady who never separated from the Prophet's family until her death.

History has documented that Imam Ali (ʿa) traveled on foot all along this journey, and never stopped his tongue from remembering God Almighty while passing through all stations and leading congregational prayers with his companions. Exegetes of the Holy Quran confirm that the following Quranic verse was revealed about these people: "*Such as remember God, standing, sitting, reclining and consider the creation of the heavens and earth, (and say): Our Lord! Thou created not this in vain. Glory be to Thee! Preserve us from the doom of fire.* [3:191]"

When Imam Ali (ʿa) and his companions arrived in Medina, the Holy Prophet (s) hurried to welcome them. When the Prophet's eyes fell upon Ali (ʿa) and he saw that his feet were swollen and bleeding, he hugged him and tears filled his loving eyes.

THE TWO GREAT DISTINCTIONS

Collective social problems can be solved with accurate planning in an efficient manner. Mutual exchange of opinions and consultation about appropriate means and ways can remove mountains of difficulties. Therefore, in the magnificent principles of Islam, great importance has been assigned to consultation and discussion in social affairs. The Holy Quran introduces those people as truth-seekers who decide social affairs by mutual consultation, as explained in the following verse: "*And those who answer the call of their Lord and establish worship, and whose affairs are a matter of counsel, and who spend of what We have bestowed on them.* [42:38]"

Solidarity and Brotherhood

Fraternity in faith is a social principle of Islam. The Holy Prophet (s) tried his best to strengthen these bonds in various ways. Having entered Medina successfully, bonds of brotherhood were established between the two rival tribes of al-Aws and al-Khazraj for the first time in their history. These two native tribes of Medina were engaged in prolonged fighting against each other for many years. By means of the Holy Prophet's sincere endeavourers, they became brothers and decided to forget bygones forever. The objective behind this bond was that the al-Aws and al-Khazraj tribes formed two fundamental columns of the army against the polytheists, so it was essential that they replace past grudges and enmities with peace, harmony and coexistence, side by side.

Next, Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ordered that his followers consisting of immigrants and helpers should become brothers and each one of them should select a brother for himself. Very often, it happened that two immigrants became brothers of each other while in other cases one immigrant selected a brother from among the helpers and shook hands as a symbol of brotherhood. They realized that a unique political and spiritual power was sheltering them. Muslim historians and narrators have written: "One day, the Holy Prophet (s) arose and said to his companions: Form groups of twos by selecting a brother for yourselves in the path of God."

History has mentioned names of people who, as approved by the Holy Prophet (s), established bonds of brotherhood with each other on that day. Abu-Bakr with Umar, Uthman with Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf, Talhah with

al-Zubayr, Ubay ibn Kaʿb with Ibn Masʿud, Ammar with Abu-Hudhayfah, and Salman with Abu-Dharr, became brothers. This bond of brotherhood that was developed between a limited number of people was different from the universal Islamic brotherhood declared by the Holy Quran for the entire Islamic world and has called all believers brothers of one another.

The Holy Prophet Selects Imam Ali as His Brother

The Holy Prophet (s) appointed brothers for all those people who were present in the Mosque. Ali (ʿa) was still alone and no brother had been appointed for him. He approached the Holy Prophet (s) and said, "You have appointed brothers for all of your companions except me!" At that moment, the Holy Prophet (s) made the historical announcement that described the special distinction that Imam Ali (ʿa) possessed with respect to his nearness to the Prophet (s): "You are my brother in this world as well as in the abode of the Hereafter. By God Almighty Who has appointed me, I intentionally set aside the task of selecting your brother so that I could select you as my own brother, a brotherhood whose dimensions would engulf both worlds."

These words reflect **Error! Bookmark not defined.**his nearness to the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** from the point of view of righteousness, spirituality, sincerity, and religious objectives. The Sunni author of *al-Riyad al-Nadirah* has admitted this reality. Also, from here we can discover the basis of the exegesis of the Quranic verse known as *Ayat al-Mubahalah* [3:61]. Quranic exegetes unanimously declare the meaning of the words: *wa-anfusana wa-anfusakum* (ourselves and yourselves) as Ali ibn Abi-Talib (ʿa). The Holy Quran has thus introduced Imam ʿ Ali (ʿ a) as the self of the Holy Prophet.

Every existing thing attracts what is homogeneous and distracts what is opposed. This is not limited to masses of earth and sky but great personalities of world truly manifest such attractions and distractions by attracting one group and repelling another. This has been planted in our primordial nature on the basis of similarity or contradiction.

Another Distinction for Imam Ali

After completing the newly built Prophet's mosque, the companions of the Holy Prophet built their houses around the mosque in such a manner that one of their house door opened inside the mosque providing them an easy entry. The Prophet (s) announced that in accordance with God's command all door entrances should be closed except the door of Ali ibn Abi-Talib's

home. This announcement was not liked by most of his companions; so, the Holy Prophet (s) went upon the pulpit and stated, "God Almighty has commanded me to declare the closure of all doors towards the mosque except the door of Ali's home; and I never issue orders about opening and closing of doors according my own desire but follow God's commands regarding all affairs."

On that day, all the Prophet's companions regarded this incident as a great privilege for Imam Ali (ʿa),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Umar ibn al-Khattab, later on, said, "Alas! If only one of the three distinctions that were bestowed upon Ali would have been bestowed upon me; namely, the Prophet's giving his daughter in marriage to Ali, all doors opening towards the mosque being closed except the door of Ali's home, and in the Battle of Khaybar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, the Prophet's giving the banner of victory in Ali's hand."

The distinctions that differentiated Ali (ʿa) from others was that his association with the mosque was never disconnected as he was born inside the Holy Kaʿbah and had opened his eyes in this world in the house of God Almighty. On this basis, since his birth, the mosque had been his home and this special privilege was never repeated for any one else. Apart from that, Imam Ali (ʿa) observed the etiquettes of the mosque in all conditions, while the others could not observe them the way they were meant to be observed.

UNIQUE HERO OF THE BATTLE OF BADRERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

The heart-piercing cries of a man called Dhamdham **Error! Bookmark not defined.**who had sheared off the ears of his own camel, punctured its nose, turned its litter backwards and upside down, could be heard, in order to attract the attention of the polytheists of Quraysh. His clothing pierced from the front and back, he was standing on the back of the camel with its nose dripping blood drops and shouting, "People! Camels transporting the musk scent are in danger from Muhammad's companions. They want all of them to be captured in the land of Badr. Mobilize for help! Rush for support!" His continuous cries were eventually responsible for assembling all valiants of Quraysh from their homes and places of work around his mount.

The horrible condition of his camel and the crying and begging for help left all of them in a state of dumbfoundedness, in no position to utilize their reason; they were left in the control of their sentiments and emotions. A majority of them decided to rush towards Badr to rescue the caravans of Quraysh. The Holy Prophet (s) was too noble to capture wealth and money of any group without reason. What had happened that made him take such a decision?

His motive was based upon two factors:

1. To let the polytheists of Quraysh know that their main trading routes had fallen under the control of the Muslim forces and in case they created any obstructions in the propagation of Islam and prevented freedom of expression, their livelihood channels would be sheared off by means of Islamic forces. No speaker could execute his duties in a decent manner unless he possessed freedom of expression and propagation.

In Mecca, the people of Quraysh were the largest obstruction in the way of Islamic propagation and the divine code of monotheism. They had given permission to all native tribes to enter Mecca freely during the Hajj pilgrimage season, but the noble leader of Islam was completely forbidden to even approach the city and its surrounding areas, and if they laid their hands upon anyone of them, they would execute him. The Hajj pilgrimage made it to be most appropriate opportunity for propagation for monotheism and sacred divine code, because people came from various points of Hijaz, forming a great gathering near the House of God.

2. A group of Muslims who were allowed to leave Medina and go to Mecca, due to some reason, as well of those who succeeded in migrating to Medina but still had not transferred their wealth from Mecca, were threatened by the polytheists. The Holy Prophet (s), by confiscating the goods of the people of Quraysh, wanted to issue a serious warning to them that they must stop their fierce oppression and harassment of Muslims.

The Holy Prophet (s), in the holy month of Ramadan of 2 A.H, accompanied by three hundred and thirteen companions, left Medina and took position near the wells of Badr, in order to confiscate the goods of the people of Quraysh that used to return from Syria and pass this route through the village of Badr. Abu-Sufyan, the polytheist leader of the caravan, became aware of the Prophet's decision and, accordingly, reported the matter to the chiefs of Mecca through Dhamdham who was hired to inform them to rush quickly and save the caravan.

The bizarre scene that Dhamdham was able to present in front of people of Quraysh in Mecca resulted in mobilizing all their warriors to rush to rescue their caravan through fighting. Nine hundred skilled and experienced fighters, equipped with the most modernized arsenal of the day, moved toward Badr. But before reaching the place, another dispatcher of Abu-Sufyan informed them that the caravan had changed its path and rescued itself from an onslaught by the Muslim forces. In spite of that, they continued their path to crush the young Muslim combatants, and in the morning of the seventeenth of Ramadan, descended from behind the hills of the plain of Badr.

Muslims had taken positions in the northern passage of Badr's downstream bank and were waiting for the caravan, when suddenly, they were informed that the warriors of Quraysh had taken positions at the elevated upstream bank. The pact of the Prophet (s) with the Helpers was only for defense and not for attack. At their commitment at al-Aqabah, they had committed themselves to defend the Prophet in Medina against the enemy's attack and not to attack enemy outside of Medina. Therefore, the Holy Prophet (s) consulted a military council consisting of the youths of the Helpers and a group of the Emigrants, and asked for their general opinion in the matter.

Opinions exchanged in the council reflected the valiance and heroism on the part of one side and degradation and cowardice on the part of other side. The prime person who stood up was Abu-Bakr who said, "The nobles and valiant warriors of Quraysh have participated in mobilization of this army. They have never believed in any code, nor accepted being degraded

and humiliated even for a moment. We have not come out with appropriate preparation for fighting. Therefore, expediency dictates that we should return to Medina from this path."

Umar, too, stood up and repeated his friend's recommendation.

At this moment al-Miqdad arose and said, "By God, we are not like the Children of Israel who said to Moses (ʿa), '*O Moses! You, together with your God, go to fight, while we are sitting here.*' We think that you should fight under divine blessing and we too will fight under your valiant leadership."

Al-Tabari has written that the Prophet's face showed signs of severe anger with respect to the opinions of the previous two persons and it was only after al-Miqdad finished speaking that his face turned to calm and happiness. Saʿd ibn Muʿadh, too, stood up and proclaimed, "Whenever you will move your feet towards the Red Sea, we will follow you. Please lead us in any direction you think is prudent." At that point, happiness and joy appeared on the Prophet's face, and with a tone of hopefulness, he said to them, "I am looking at the slaughterhouse of the people of Quraysh." Then the Islamic army under command of the Holy Prophet (s) started moving and finally took positions near the waters of Badr.

Concealment of Reality

A group of historians, like al-Tabari and al-Miqrizi, tried to hide the reality by rolling up the curtain of prejudice and not quote the text of the discussion of Abu-Bakr and Umar with the Holy Prophet (s). They wrote, "Abu-Bakr arose and said good words and then Umar stood up and said similar good things!" But it should be asked why they did not quote the exact text of their words, while the speeches of al-Miqdad and Saʿd were quoted in full detail? If those two had spoken good words, why did unhappiness and anger appear upon the Prophet's face, as al-Tabari himself mentioned?

It is however appropriate to investigate the position of Imam Ali (ʿa) in this confrontation.

Lines of Truth and Falsehood against Each Other

The positioning of battle lines for Muslims and warriors of Quraysh started and some minor incident resulted in inflaming the battle. The fighting started on a one by one basis, as the mighty combatant from the people of Quraysh were Utbah, Hind's father and Abu-Sufyan's father-in-law, his

elder brother Shaybah, and al-Walid the son of Utbah, shouting with wrath and demanding a combatant form the other side. The three valiant forerunners from the Helpers came forward and introduced themselves to the three people of Quraysh, but they declined combat with them and instead shouted loudly, “O Muhammad! We would fight only against person from the Quraysh who are our equivalent in combat.” The Prophet (s) commanded Ubaydah ibn al-Harith ibn Abd al-Muttalib, Hamzah and Ali (ʿa) to rise and answer the enemy. The three most celebrated officers of the Islamic army, while covering their faces with masks, went to the battlefield. All of them introduced themselves and Utbah accepted to combat with them, saying, “All of them possess the dignity of being our combatant in this battle.”

Here, some historians, like al-Waqidi, wrote: “When three youths from the valiant Helpers offered to go to the battlefield, the Prophet himself forbade them from combating, because he did not want the Helpers to lead the prime battle of Islam. He wanted to show all of them that the code of monotheism was dearest to him and that he was willing to dispatch his dearest and nearest persons to the battlefield for it. With this in mind, he looked towards his own relatives, the Banu-Hashim, and said, Arise and fight with falsehood; they want to quench God’s illumination.”

Others narrated that in this battle, the three combatants of the Islamic army went to fight with the combatants of the opposite camp according to their ages. The youngest person, Ali (ʿa), went towards al-Walid, Muʿawiyah’s maternal uncle; their middle aged, Hamzah, went towards Utbah, Muʿawiyah’s maternal grandfather; and the oldest, Ubaydah, started fighting with Shaybah. But in accordance with the narration of Ibn Hisham, Shaybah fought with Hamzah and Utbah fought with Ubaydah.

Let us see which of these two reports are correct. By considering two facts, reality will become clear.

Historians have written that Ali and Hamzah immediately killed their opponents by throwing them on the ground, but exchange of sword blows continued between Ubaydah and his opponent in a way that both of them injured each other without any one emerging victorious. Ali and Hamzah, after killing their opponents, rushed to help Ubaydah and killed his opponent.

Imam ʿ Ali (ʿ a), the Commander of the Faithful, in a letter written to Muʿawiyah, reminded him, “The swords that I struck in one day upon the heads of your grandfather, your uncle, and your brother, is still in my

possession."

Imam ʿ Ali (ʿ a) meant that he was still equipped with the same strength.

At another place, he said: "O Muʿawiyah! Do you scare me with the sword when you are completely aware of the places where my swords struck your brother, uncle and grandfather? And know that I killed all of them in a single day."

From these two letters, it becomes quite clear that Imam Ali (ʿa) killed Muʿawiyah's grandfather, and that Ali and Hamzah killed their opponents almost instantaneously. Therefore, had Hamzah been the opponent of Utbah (Muʿawiyah's grandfather), in that case Imam Ali (ʿa) would not have said, "O Muʿawiyah! Your grandfather was struck by my sword!" Therefore, it is inevitable that Hamzah fought Shaybah, and Ubaydah fought Utbah and that Ali fought al-Walid, and rushed to help Ubaydah and killed his opponent Utbah.

IMAM ALI; THE HOLY PROPHET'S SON-IN-LAWERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

Imam Ali (ʿa), in obedience to God's command, started to think to end the crises of his youth and provide a permanent abode to his life's boat. But a personality like Imam Ali (ʿa) would never select a life partner to fulfill temporary calm without considering the overall dimensions of his future life. He would look for a life partner who would be a suitable match for him in firm belief, faith, ideology, piety, nobility and chastity. Such a life partner could not have been any one except the daughter of the Holy Prophet (s), Lady Fatimah al-Zahra' (ʿa). He knew her since childhood and was fully aware of her characteristics and virtues.

Suitors of Lady Fatimah

Before Imam Ali's asking for Lady Fatimah's hand in marriage, people like Umar and Abu-Bakr had already expressed their desire to marry the Prophet's daughter and both of them had heard her father's reply that he was waiting for divine revelation in this regard. Being disappointed in their efforts, both of them discussed the matter with Saʿd ibn Muʿadh , the chief of the al-Aws clan, and reached the conclusion that no one except Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** deserved to marry Lady Fatimah (ʿ a) and that the Holy Prophet (s) had him in sight for this purpose. All of them went together to Imam Ali (ʿa) and found him in a garden possessed by one of the Helpers, irrigating plants. They said to him, "Nobles of the Quraysh tribe have already asked to marry the Holy Prophet's daughter and been told that this decision depends upon Divine will. We think that if you ask to marry her, you will certainly receive a positive answer. And, if your wealth is not sufficient, we are ready to help you."

Hearing these words, tears of joy appeared in his eyes and he said, "Yes! The daughter of the Holy Prophet (s) will be the best match as my life partner, and I do like her."

Having uttered these words, he quit his work and went straight to see the Holy Prophet (s), who was in the company of Ummu-Salamah, his virtuous wife. When he knocked the door, the Prophet (s) immediately said to Ummu-Salamah, "Hurry up and open the door for someone who is loved by God Almighty and his Prophet."

Ummu-Salamah narrated, "The keen desire to identify such a person as praised by the Prophet (s) overwhelmed with such an ecstasy that I had to

steady myself on my feet. I opened the door and Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** entered and sat down in the presence of the Holy Prophet (s).**Error! Bookmark not defined.**The grandeur of the Prophet's presence prevented him from speaking and he sat with head lowered because of shyness, and silence prevailed in the assembly."

The Holy Prophet (s) broke the silence and said, "It seems as though you came for something."

Imam Ali (ʿa) replied, "My bonds with the Prophet's clan, steadfastness in the path of faith, and my endeavors in fighting for the advancement of Islam are very well know to you."

The Holy Prophet (s) replied, "You are much more elevated than whatever you have just said."

Imam Ali (ʿa) said, "Do you think that it would be feasible for you to marry Fatimah to me?"

Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** had rested his proposal only on the basis of his righteousness and sincere efforts for Islam. He, personally, presented his case without bringing any one else as a source, and taught a lesson to all others that this was the criteria of superiority rather than handsomeness, wealth and position. The Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** also used this opportunity to demonstrate the fundamental freedom of women in the selection of husbands; and in reply to Imam Ali (ʿa), he said, "Before you, other individuals have asked for my daughter's hand and I have presented their proposals to her but observed signs of serious disapproval upon her face. Right now, I am going to present your proposal to her and will let you know of her response."

The Holy Prophet (s) then entered Lady Fatimah's room. She rose and took off the cloak from his shoulders, removed his shoes, and washed them, and after helping him with his ritual ablution, sat down in his presence. The Prophet (s) began the conversation in the following manner: "Ali, son of Abu-Talib, is one whose superiority and exalted position in Islam is clearly known to me, and I had requested God Almighty to give you in marriage to His most distinguished creation, and right now, he has arrived to seek your hand in marriage; what is your opinion in this matter?"

Lady Fatimah did not speak, but she neither turned her face away from the Holy Prophet (s) nor did she show the least sign of unhappiness. The Holy Prophet (s) rose from his place and said, "God is the Most Great. My

daughter's silence is an indication of her permission."

Matching of spiritual, intellectual, and moral virtues

It is true that, in the code of Islam, every Muslim individual is equal in the eyes of God Almighty and needs to be respected like every other Muslim, and every Muslim woman, if married to a Muslim man, has been married to her equal, but where dimensions of intellectual and spiritual aspects are concerned, many women are not equals to some men, and visa versa. Muslims of noble and gentle background who possess epic human virtues, deep foresight, knowledge and moral ethics should select their life partner from among women who are their equals in intellectual, spiritual and moral virtues.

This criterion is also applicable to pious and chaste ladies who possess exalted moral virtues, deep foresight and profound knowledge. The highest goal of marriage, to accomplish relative harmony, calmness and happiness during the entire duration of married life, cannot be achieved without paying attention to these points. Therefore, until and unless shadows of moral similarities of virtues, ethical beliefs and spiritual attractions do not surround the marital environment, such a marital bond would lack the required stability and permanence. God's command to the Holy Prophet (s) in the following words can be understood perfectly: "If I had not created Ali, there would have been no equivalent match for your daughter Fatimah upon the earth."

The above command defines the criteria of equivalency for marital bonds as based upon similarities in social ranks and common spiritual virtues.

Expenses of Matrimonial Ceremony

At this moment, all financial net worth of Imam Ali (ʿa) consisted of a sword and a coat of arms that were required for fighting in the way of God. He also possessed a camel to irrigate gardens of Medina, which made him self-sufficient and needless. Having sought the hand of the Prophet's daughter in marriage, Imam Ali (ʿa) was supposed to make necessary arrangements for household items to start a common married life with his wife. The Hoy Prophet (s) accepted that Ali (ʿa) should sell his coat of arms and the money earned be handed over to him as a part of the dowry of Lady Fatimah (ʿ a).

The coat of arms was sold for four hundred Dirhams. The Holy Prophet (s) assigned apart of it to Bilal to buy perfumes for Lady Fatimah, and the remaining amount was given to Ammar ibn Yasir and a group of his

companions to procure the household items required by Ali and Fatimah. A glance upon the dowry of Lady Fatimah (ʿa) would enable everyone to see the simple lifestyle of this exalted and noble lady of Islam. Dispatchers of the Holy Prophet (s) returned from the bazaar, and whatever was arranged for Lady Fatimah (ʿa) is listed as follows:

1. A piece of dress with 7 Dirham cost.
2. Headcover scarf with 1 Dirham cost.
3. A bathrobe that did not cover the entire body.
4. One Arab bed filled with palm leaves.
5. Two mattresses of Egyptian linen, one of wool and the other filled with palm leaves.
5. Four pillows, two filled with wool and two with palm leaves.
6. A curtain.
7. A straw mat.
8. A manual stone-mill for grinding flour.
9. A large tray.
10. A water-skin bag.
11. A wooden pot for milk.
12. A skin pot for water.
13. A water barrel with a spout.
14. A large copper pot.
15. A few small pitchers of pottery.
16. A silver bracelet.

The Holy Prophet's companions placed the purchased dowry items before him. While he was touching the items purchased for his daughter's home he said: "O God! Bestow Your blessing upon the married couple, most of whose household items consist of pottery."(1)

Dowry of Lady Fatimah

The dowry of the Holy Prophet's daughter consisted of five hundred Dirhams; each Dirham was equivalent of one mitigal of silver, equivalent to about five grams. The marriage ceremony of the Prophet's daughter was arranged with utmost simplicity, without any extraordinary formalities. Only one month had passed after the signing of the marital contract that the Prophet's wives asked Imam Ali (ʿa) why he was not taking his wife to

(1) Al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar* 43, 94; al-Irbili, *Kashf al-Ghummah* 1/359. According to this book, all household items of Lady Fatimah (ʿa) were purchased for 63 Dirham.

his own house. In reply, Imam Ali (ʿa) announced his readiness. Ummu-Ayman came to the Holy Prophet (s) and said, "Had Khadijah been alive, she would have certainly enjoyed the marriage ceremony of her daughter." When the Holy Prophet (s) heard Khadijah's name, his blessed eyes filled with tears and he replied: "She believed me when everybody refused; she helped me in advancement of God's religion and spent her entire wealth in the propagation of Islam." Ummu-Ayman said, "Let us make everyone happy by sending Fatimah to her husband's home."

The Holy Prophet (s) ordered one room to be prepared for the wedding night of Lady Fatimah.(1) When the time of departure finally arrived, the Holy Prophet (s) asked for his daughter to be brought near him. While shyness beautified her entire face, Lady Fatimah (ʿa) appeared before the Prophet and, due to intense shyness, her feet trembled and she was about to fall down. At this instant, the Holy Prophet (s) prayed for her, "May God prevent you from stumbling in both worlds." Then he raised the veil from his daughter's face and placed her hand in Ali's hand, congratulated him and said: "Congratulation for marrying the daughter of God's Prophet and having been blessed with Fatimah as your wife." Then, he looked towards Fatimah (ʿa) and said, "Congratulations for having Ali as your husband." Then, he told them to go towards their home and asked his dearest companion, Salman, to hold the string of Fatimah's camel in his hands, thus, announcing the grandeur and exalted position of his blessed daughter.

When the bride and bridegroom arrived in their wedding night chamber, both of them due to intense shyness looked toward the ground. The Holy Prophet (s) then entered the chamber and sprinkled water over the head and body of his daughter and then prayed for them, "O God! This daughter of mine is the one most beloved to me. O God! Ali, too, is the most beloved person among men to me. O God! Make their loving relationship stronger."

(1) *Ibid*, 59.

IMAM ALI IN THE BATTLE OF UHUDERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

The polytheists of Quraysh were badly demoralized because of their severe defeat in the Battle of Badr. In order to compensate for this defeat and avenge their dead, they decided to gather a well-equipped army of brave warriors from all of the Arab tribes and march upon Medina. Amr ibn al-Aas and a few others were assigned to invite the tribes of Kinanah and Thaqif to provide assistance in fighting. They succeeded in motivating three thousands warriors to join them in fighting against the Muslims.

The intelligence unit informed the Holy Prophet (s) of this move and of the decision made by the polytheists of Mecca to wage war against Muslims. For confrontation with the enemy, the Holy Prophet (s) formed a military council the majority of whose members suggested fighting with the enemy outside the city.

Having offered the congregational Friday Prayer, the Prophet (s), with an army of ten thousands warriors, left Medina and went towards the foot of the Mount Uhud . Battle lines of the two armies faced each other on the morning of the seventh of Shawwal in 3 A.H. The Islamic army selected a strategic place for its garrison that had the advantage of being fortified from behind by Mount Uhud. But, in the middle of two mountains, there was a wide opening that could enable the enemy to go around the mountain and attack the Islamic garrison from behind. In order to prevent this, the Prophet (s) assigned Abdullah ibn Jubayr with fifty archers on the height of the mountain and ordered them strictly never to leave their strategic position even after the Muslim army became victorious and the enemy started running from the battlefield.

The Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** gave the banner in the hand of Musʿab who belonged to the Banu-Abd al-Dar tribe,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** because the banner of the people of Quraysh too was being held by a man from the same tribe. The war began, and because of the bravery of the Islamic army, the people of Quraysh started running away from the battlefield after suffering severe casualties. The archers guarding the mountain's peak imagined that their presence over there was no longer required. Therefore, against the orders of the Holy Prophet (s), they left their strategic guarding position to collect the spoils of war. Khalid ibn al-Walid, who was a brave and experienced warrior, knew from the very beginning that the access between the two mountains

was the key to victory in this battle. In the beginning of the battle, he attempted to enter from behind the Islamic army but was forced to retreat because of the severe resistance of the archers guarding the mountain heights.

This time, seeing the strategic spot vacated by its guards, he attacked the neglectful Muslims from behind and created chaos and confusion among them, enabling the defeated army of Quraysh to once again enter the battlefield from this unguarded strategic opening. In this surprise assault, the Islamic flag carrier, Musʿab ibn Umayr, was killed, and since his face was masked, his killer thought that he had killed the Holy Prophet (s); therefore, he started shouting, "O People! Know it that Muhammad has been killed." This news spread among the Muslims like fire and a majority of them started running in such a manner that the number of warriors left in the battlefield could have been counted on one's fingers.

Ibn Hisham wrote, "Anas ibn Nadran, uncle of Anas ibn Malik, reported: When the Islamic army was inflicted with the surprise assault and news of the Holy Prophet's death was circulated among them, a majority of Muslims thought of saving their own lives, and each one of them took shelter in a corner. He continued: I saw a group of Emigrants and Helpers including Umar ibn al-Khattab, Talhah and Abdullah sitting in a corner, busy thinking about their own safety. I asked them in a complaining tone, 'Why are you sitting over there?' They replied, 'The Prophet has been killed; therefore, fighting does not make any sense.' I told them, 'Arise and be martyred in the same path in which he has been martyred. If Muhammad is killed, his God is still alive.' He added: My words had no effect upon them; I took my own arms in my hands and returned to the battle."

Ibn Hisham added: "Anas was inflicted with seventy wounds in this battle, and none was able to identify his body except his sister. A group of Muslims were so depressed that they started planning for their own safety by resorting to Abdullah ibn Ubay the hypocrite to seek immunity for them from Abu-Sufyan! A group of them took shelter in the mountains."

Ibn Abi'l-Hadid wrote: "A person was studying al-Waqidi's book under the tutorship of the great scholar, Muhammad ibn Maʿad al-Alawi in Baghdad in the year 608 A.H. One day, I joined that meeting. When the lecture reached where Muhammad ibn Maslamah had clearly narrated that on the Day of Uhud, he had witnessed the Muslims ascending the mountain, with his own eyes while their Prophet (s) called them by their names and raised

his voice, 'O! *So-and-so*, come towards me!' But no one replied positively to his call. The teacher explained that *so-and-so* and *so-and-so* were the very same people who grabbed the authority and post in their hands after the Prophet's demise, and the narrator did not have the courage to mention their frank names."

Self-Sacrifice Indicates Commitment to Belief

Valor and self-sacrifice are indicators of a commitment towards an objective; continuous monitoring of these acts can measure precisely the degree of one's faith towards his or her cherished goals. The Holy Quran has explained this reality in the following verse: "*The true believers are only those who believe in God and His Messenger and afterward, doubt not, but strive with their wealth and their lives for the cause of God. Such are the sincere.* [49-15]"

The Battle of Uhud**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was a golden opportunity to identify a believer from a nonbeliever. Running away from the battlefield of this war was so sad and touching that even Muslim women who had arrived at the battlefield to perform duties of nursing the injured and to provide water to the thirsty were forced to defend the existence of the Holy Prophet (s). Nasibah, a women present on the battlefield, took a sword in her own hand and defended the Holy Prophet (s) when she saw some of the claimers of faith escape. When the Prophet (s) witnessed the self-sacrificing spirit of this valiant woman as compared to the cowardice of others, he made his historical statement about her bravery: "The rank of Nasibah is far superior to the position of *so-and-so*."

Ibn Abi'l-Hadid comments: "The narrator has committed treachery against the Prophet (s) for not writing the names of the persons whom the Holy Prophet (s)called by names."(1)

Exactly opposed to these people, history admits the valor and self-sacrificing spirit of a noble officer who was a shining example in the entire history of Islam, and this re-achieved victory of Muslims was the result of his epic valor. This exalted officer, a real devotee was the lord of the pious and the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali ('a). In the beginning of the Battle of Uhud, the reason for the people of Quraysh's quick retreat from the battlefield was that nine of their valiant flag-bearers were killed by Imam Ali one after the other, and the army of Quraysh was badly shaken, so demoralized that it decided to escape from the battlefield instead of

(1) *Ibid*. 14/266.

offering any formidable resistance.(1)

Details of Imam's Epic Self-Sacrifice

The contemporary Egyptian scholars who analyzed important Islamic episodes have not presented Imam Ali's contribution the way it deserved to be or, at least, the way it has been recorded in the other books of history; they have presented his epic valor as equivalent to the level of others. Therefore, it is necessary to describe here, at least in summary, the details of his heroic sacrifices from Sunni authentic sources.

Ibn Athir has written in his book on history (i.e. *al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh* 2/107): "The Holy Prophet (s) was attacked by various groups from all directions. Imam Ali ('a), with the command of the Prophet (s), repulsed their deadly assaults and, by killing some men of each group, forced them to be scattered, and this pattern was repeated several times. To compliment this epic struggle, the dispatcher of Divine revelation appeared before the Holy Prophet (s) and, praising the epic valor of Imam Ali ('a), said, 'This is the highest degree of sacrifice that he has shown.' The Holy Prophet (s) testified his statement and replied, 'I am from Ali and ' Ali is from me.' Then a heavenly voice was heard in the battlefield whose text was as follows: No one is as valiant as Ali; and there is no sword like Dhu'l-Faqar."

Ibn Abi'l-Hadid has described the above episode in greater detail: "The groups who attacked the Prophet (s) consisted of fifty people; and Ali ('a), on foot, scattered them."

Then he narrates the descending of the Angel Gabriel ('a): "In addition to the above absolutely authentic information from historical point of view, I also have seen in some of the versions of *Kitab al-Ghazawat* by Muhammad ibn Ishaq about the descending of Angel Gabriel ('a). I asked my own teacher, Abd al-Wahhab Sakinah, about its authenticity, and he replied that it was true. I asked him why this authentic incident had not been mentioned by the writers of the six authentic books (i.e. *al-Sihah al-Sittah*). He replied: There are many authentic traditions that the writers of these books have neglectfully omitted!"

Imam Ali ('a), describing his sacrifice, said, "When the polytheists of Quraysh attacked us like a flood, the Helpers and Emigrants ran towards their homes. In spite of being inflicted with seventy wounds, I continued to defend the Prophet (s). I removed his cloak and placed his hand upon an

(1) *Ibid.* 14/250.

open wound."

According to a narration quoted in Shaykh al-Saduq's *al-Khisal* 2/15, Imam Ali ('a), in defending the life of the Holy Prophet (s), fought so fiercely that even his sword was broken. The Prophet (s) gave his own sword, Dhu'l-Faqar, so that he could continue fighting in the path of God."

Ibn Abi'l-Hadid**Error! Bookmark not defined.** has written: "When a majority of his companions escaped from the battlefield, the enemy's onslaughts upon him increased. A column from the tribe of Banu-Kinanah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and four famous valiant warriors from the tribe of Abd-Manaf attacked the Prophet (s) ferociously. Imam Ali ('a)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** flew to his side and circled around him**Error! Bookmark not defined.** like a butterfly, fighting the enemies to prevent them from reaching him. One column consisted of more than fifty people. It was only the fiery strokes of Ali's sword that forced them to retreat and disperse. Those four heroes and ten other people, whose names have not been recorded in history, were all killed. The Angel Gabriel ('a) congratulated this valiant struggle of Imam Ali ('a) to protect the Holy Prophet (s), who agreed, saying: Ali is from me and I am from him."

In ancient wars, the flag-bearer was supposed to posses an exalted position, because it was always handed over to the bravest and most courageous person. His firm determination and courage maintained the high morale of all the other warriors; therefore, a few people were always selected in advance as flag-bearers so that if one was killed, the other one would carry the banner in his place and the fighting would continue without any interruption. Since the polytheists of Quraysh had seen the valiance and bravery of Muslims in the Battle of Badr, they assigned their bravest and most valiant warriors as successive flag-bearers.

The prime flag-bearer of the Quraysh army was Talhah ibn Talhah, who was the first to have been killed by Ali's stroke. After him, all of them were killed by Ali ('a); namely: Sa'id ibn Talhah, Uthman ibn Talhah, Sha'fah ibn Talhah, Harith ibn Abi-Talhah, Aziz ibn Uthman, Abdullah ibn Jamilah, Arta'ah ibn Shurahbil and Daw'ab. On seeing their brave flag-bearers killed, the troops of Quraysh started fleeing desperately from the battlefield and it this first victory of the Muslim army was accomplished because of the epic struggle of Imam Ali ('a).(1)

(1) *Tafsir al-Qummi*, page 103; Shaykh al-Mufid, *Kitab al-Irshad*, page 115; *Bihar*

Shaykh al-Mufid, in his book *Kitab al-Irshad,* has narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (ʿa) that there were nine flag-bearers of the people of Quraysh, all killed by Imam Ali. Ibn Hisham has mentioned the names of people other than these nine who were killed in the prime attack by Imam Ali.(1)

al-Anwar 20/15.

(1) Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah* 1/81-84.

ABSOLUTE VICTORY OF ISLAM OVER POLYTHEISM

The Arab idol-worshipping army thought that they would be confronted by the Muslims on the battlefield. Seeing no signs of their presence, they moved speedily until they reached the city doorway. Seeing a wide trench newly excavated at the vulnerable areas of the city took them by surprise, leaving them totally dumbfounded and confused. The enemy soldiers were more than ten thousand, while the number of Muslim combatants did not exceed three thousand.(1) The siege of Medina**Error! Bookmark not defined.** continued for one month and whenever the Quraysh warriors and their allies tried to cross the trench, they were prevented by a company of archers who were responsible for its defense, having taken positions behind fortified-bunkers at a short distance in the vicinity of the trench. Archery attacks continued from both sides without any side achieving clear victory over the other side.

This status quo for the enemy troops was very expensive and difficult, because the cold air and shortage of fodder for their animals was threatening them with certain death and the idea of waging war was slowly being replaced with fatigue, exhaustion and low morale. They saw no other option but to motivate their most valiant and strong warriors to cross the trench by jumping over it on their horses. Finally, by jumping from a point where it was less wide, some were able to cross the trench and entered the battlefield.

One among these six persons who crossed the trench was a famous Arab hero, Amr ibn Abd-Wudd, who was regarded as a unique and valiant warrior of the Arabian Peninsula and alone equivalent to one thousands warriors. He was completely covered with an armor of steel from head to toe and roaring like a lion in front of the battle lines of the Muslims, cried: "Where are the claimers of Paradise? Is there no one among you who would dare to send me to hell or who I could send to Paradise?" His repeated cries sounded like a certain invitation to death and a profound fear descended upon the Muslim combatants. It seemed as though they had lost their power of speech. Once again, the Arab released his horse's bridle and walked gracefully in front of the Muslim battle lines and arrogantly

(1) Al-Miqrizi, *Imta' al-Asma'*, as quoted from Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah* 2/238.

shouted for a combatant to fight him.

Each time he cried for combat, only a youth stood up and asked permission from the Prophet (s) to go for combat, but his request was turned down thrice by the Prophet (s). That youth was Imam Ali (ʿa) and the Holy Prophet said to him, "Sit down, this is Amr!" Amr cried loudly for the third time and said, "My voice has almost gone hoarse crying for one among you to come and face me Is there no one?" This time again, Imam Ali (ʿa) pleaded with the Holy Prophet (s) to let him go for combat. The Prophet (s) replied, "This is Amr challenging you to combat." Imam Ali (ʿa) replied, "I know." Eventually, the Prophet (s) yielded to Ali's repeated requests for combat with Amr, gave his own sword to him, placed the turban upon his head and prayed for him. He said, "O God, protect Ali from any harm. O God, in the Battle of Badr, Ubaydah and in the Battle of Uhud, the Lion of God, Hamzah were taken from me; O God, protect Ali from any harm." Then he recited the Quranic verse: "My Lord, do not leave me childless, though You are the best of inheritors. [21:89]"

Then, he proclaimed for all to hear, "The symbols of monotheism and polytheism are combating each other."(1) Imam Ali was a perfect manifestation of true faith, while Amr was a perfect manifestation of polytheism. Perhaps, the Holy Prophet (s) meant that the distance between faith and polytheism has been compressed in the personalities of the two combatants and defeat of belief in this battle would strengthen polytheism in the world. Imam Ali (ʿa) arrived in the battlefield and said, "Take it easy, a powerful man has come to respond to your challenge." Imam Ali (ʿa) was clad in an iron coat and only his eyes were showing through his head gear. The Arab hero, having identified his opponent, refused to fight with him and said: "Since your father was a friend of mine, I do not want to spill the blood of his son."

Ibn Abi'l-Hadid narrated: "My teacher of history, Abu'l-Khayr said that since Amr was present in the Battle of Badr and saw the epic bravery of Imam Ali (ʿa) with his own eyes, he was looking for a false excuse to avoid fighting with such a valiant hero."

Ultimately, Imam Ali (ʿa) said to Amr, "Do not be anxious about my getting killed. I will either be killed or emerge victorious and be lucky in both cases, because my place will be in paradise; however, in both cases hell is waiting for you."

(1) Al-Karajaki, *Kanz al-Fawa'id*, page 137.

ʿAmr smiled and replied, "O my nephew, this distribution does not seem fair; let paradise and hell both belong to you." Imam Ali (ʿa) then reminded Amr of his vow with God that if a man from the Quraysh tribe would request him of two things, he would at least accept one of them; and Amr replied that it was correct. Imam Ali (ʿa) said, "My first request with you is to accept Islam."

ʿAmr replied, "Forgive my rejection of this request, because I do not need your religion."

Then, Imam Ali (ʿa) said, "Do not wage war. Return back to your native place and leave the Prophet (s) to others, so that if they are victorious, it will bring great happiness to them, and if he is killed, you will achieve your desire without participating in the act."

ʿAmr replied, "The Quraysh ladies do not think like that. How can I return now when Muhammad is within my reach and the time has arrived for me to act according to my vow? I vowed after the Battle of Badr not to put oil on my head before taking my revenge from Muhammad."

This time, Imam Ali (ʿa) said, "Let us prepare for combat to end our argument with the stroke of the sword."

The old champion saw Imam Ali (ʿa) on foot, so he, too, dismounted from his horse and attacked Imam Ali's head with a severe stroke of his sword. Imam Ali (ʿa) defended the attack with his shield, but it was sheared into two halves and resulted in injuring his head. Imam Ali (ʿa) delivered a crucial blow of his sward upon Amr's leg that caused him to fall down upon the ground. The sound of striking swords and dust that arose from the battleground prevented soldiers of the opposite camp from being able to see the ultimate outcome of the battle between the two giant combatants. But, when the loud cry of *allahu-akbar* was raised by Imam Ali (ʿa), an exclamation of joy and cheerfulness arose from the Muslims knowing that Imam Ali (ʿa) had been victorious over Amr and thus saved the Muslims from his sedition. The killing of this valiant warrior affected the other five warriors who had crossed the trench following Amr (namely, Ikrimah, Hubayrah, Nufayl, Dirar, and Mirdas) to started fleeing on their horses. Four of them succeeded in crossing the trench and informing the people of Quraysh of the killing of their great hero. But Nufayl, while trying to jump the trench, fell down together with his horse, and was killed in the trench with a stroke of Ali's sword.[1]

(1) Al-Diyarbakri, *Tarikh al-Khamis* 1/487.

The death of Amr resulted in forever silencing the battle fever and forced the various Allies to return to their native lands. The foundations of Islam that were threatened by a powerful enemy were preserved and secured through the radiation of Imam Ali's epic self-sacrifice.

Worth of this epic self-sacrificing

For a researcher who has read a portion of Islamic history comprehensively from authentic sources and analyzed it methodically, the epic worth of this great sacrifice cannot remain hidden.

It is sufficient to know that if Ali (ʿa) had not gone to combat Amr, no Muslim present on the scene would have the courage to combat an enemy who had transgressed upon them. The greatest shame for an army is not to offer a positive response to an enemy's combat challenge in the battlefield, and be defeated; rather, if the enemy had entered a hand to hand combat and simply broken the siege and returned to his native land, the spot of this shameful impotence would have remained upon the forehead of history of Islamic defense till eternity.

If Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** had not entered the battle or, had been killed, all the soldiers who gathered around the Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** would have certainly fled towards the mountain heights. Such similar incidents had occurred in the battles of Uhud and Hunayn, as recorded in Islamic history, that except a few people countable upon fingers who offered stiff resistance, persevered and defended the life of the Holy Prophet (s),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** all of them fled, leaving him alone in the battlefield.

If Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** had not resisted the transgression of Amr or been killed in this path, the crossing over of the enemy soldiers would have become easy and absolutely certain without any doubt. Ultimately, continuous waves of enemy columns would have attacked the command center until the last point of resistance would have been destroyed. The ultimate result of this battle would have been nothing except victory of polytheism over monotheism, and the closing of the Islamic file forever. Therefore, the Holy Prophet (s) praised Imam Ali's self-sacrifice on that day and delivered this historical statement, "The worth of the stroke that Ali struck upon the enemy on the Day of the Trench is superior to the worship of all the inhabitants of the world."**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

In addition to this self-sacrifice, Imam Ali's stalwartness was so exemplary

that after killing Amr, he did not even look at his precious coat of arms and other arsenal of war, and without removing the clothing from his dead body, he left the battlefield. He was rebuked by Umar for this, but Imam Ali (ʿa) did not pay any attention to him. It was because of this that when Amr's sister arrived upon his dead body, she said, "I will not shed tears upon you because you have been killed by such a generous person that he has not even touched your precious clothing and war arsenals."

THE BATTLE OF KHAYBARERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED. AND THREE GREAT DISTINCTIONS

The martyrdom of Imam al-Hasan (ʿa) provided an opportunity for Muʿawiyah to prepare the ground for the rulership of his son Yazid during his own lifespan by seeking the allegiance of the Prophet's exalted companions and supporters who were living in Mecca and Medina.

In order to accomplish his cherished goal, Muʿawiyah left Syria with the aim of pilgrimage to the House of God, and during his stay in the religious center of Hijaz, he held meeting with some companions and supporters of the Prophet (s). After circumambulating the Kaʿbah, he rested for a while at a place that was the meeting place of Quraysh chiefs during the pre-Islamic era, and discussed his plan with Saʿd ibn Abi-Waqqas and other personalities, because without their blessings, the rulership of Yazid was neither practical nor feasible.

He sat down upon the throne that was placed for him and asked Saʿd to sit next to him. He saw the environment of meeting suitable to dare and start slandering against Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. This act near the House of God and in the presence of the respectable companions who were fully aware of the distinguished virtues and bravery of Imam Ali (ʿa) was not an easy task. All of them knew very well that it was not too long before that the environment of the Kaʿbah from inside as well as outside would be filled with gods of falsehood destroyed by Imam Ali (ʿa) when he put his feet upon his blessed shoulders of the Holy Prophet (s) and chopped the idols that were worshipped by Muʿawiyah himself and his forefathers for prolonged years.

Although Saʿd was a bitter enemy of Imam Ali (ʿa) and he envied his exalted distinctions and spiritual status, the day Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was killed, all the people joyfully selected Imam Ali (ʿa) as their leader to manage their affairs, with the exception of a few who refused to offer their allegiance, including Saʿd. When Ammar invited him to show allegiance to Imam Ali (ʿa), he replied in an insulting manner. Ammar informed Imam Ali (ʿa) about this incident and he said, "His envy has prevented him." His open demonstration of enmity toward Imam ʿ Ali (ʿa) was known to everyone. When the second caliph formed the council to select a caliph, he appointed its members himself and selected Saʿd and Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf, Saʿd's cousin and Uthman's son-in-law. People

with foresight outside of the Council openly said that Umar had intentionally prevented Ali (ʿa) from assuming the office of leadership for the third time, and the result declared by the council was exactly as predicted.

When Saʿd, in spite of his bitter enmity against Imam Ali (ʿa), observed that Muʿawiyah was speaking ill about Imam Ali (ʿa), he suddenly turned his face towards Muʿawiyah and said, "You placed me upon your own throne to slander Ali! I swear by God that had one of these three distinctions awarded to Ali been given to me, it would have been better than my possessing all the wealth of this world, covered by sunlight: (1) The day the Holy Prophet appointed him as his successor in Medina and went towards the Battle of Tabuk and said to him, 'Your position with respect to me is like the position of Aaron with respect to Moses, with the exception that there will be no other prophet after me.' (2) The day when it was decided that the Prophet would debate with the Christian chiefs of Najran, he took the hands of Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husayn and said, 'O God! These are the members of my family (i.e. the Ahl al-Bayt).' (3) The day when Muslims had already conquered important parts of all the Jewish fortresses, but the fortress of Qamus that was the largest center of their valiant fighters was laid under siege for eight days by the Muslim army and the Muslim warriors did not have the power to conquer and open its gate, a severe headache prevented the Holy Prophet (s) from appearing at the scene of combat to take over the army command in his own hand and every day he gave the banner in the hands of one of the commanders of the army, all of them returned without any result. One day, he gave the banner to Abu-Bakr and the following day to Umar, but both of them returned without accomplishing anything. Continuation of this situation was so bitter and annoying for the Prophet (s) that he announced, 'Tomorrow, I will give the banner in the hand of one who will never flee from combat and will never show his back to the enemy. He will be one who is loved by God and His Prophet and God will open this fortress with his hands.' When the Holy Prophet's words were narrated for Imam Ali (ʿa), he raised his face towards heaven and said, 'O God, whatever is granted by You, there is no one to take it away; and whatever is not granted by You, there is no one to grant it.' When the sun arose the next day, all the companions gathered around the Prophet's tent in order to see to whom the great distinction would be awarded. When the Holy Prophet (s) came out of his tent, the necks of his companions stretched towards him, and I stood nearby thinking that distinction would be given to me. Umar and Abu-Bakr both were more

anxious than the others to have that great distinction for themselves. Suddenly, the Prophet (s) asked, 'Where is Ali?' He was told that he was inflicted with sore eyes and was resting in his tent. He ordered Salamah ibn al-Akwaʿ to go and hold Ali's hand and bring him there. Then he prayed for Ali's health that was granted. Then he made Ali wear his own coat of arms, tied his sword to his back, handed him the banner, and instructed him to invite them to Islam before starting the battle; and in case of decline, he should suggest to them to live freely, following their own religion, after disarming under the security of Islam and paying the prescribed tax. If they refused to accept all these options, then he should fight them. The Prophet (s) added, 'Know that whenever God guides a person through your means is better than possessing red woolen camels and giving all of them away in the path of God.'

When Saʿd narrated this incident, the people assembled in that gathering scattered angrily in protest leaving Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** alone.

Shinning Victory of Islam in the Battle of Khaybar*Error! Bookmark not defined.*

This time again, Muslims, under the radiance of Imam Ali's self-sacrifice, were able to achieve a shinning victory, which was called the conqueror of Khaybar. When he reached near the fort with a group of soldiers following him, Imam Ali (ʿa) placed the flag upon the ground. At that moment, all warriors rushed out from the fort. Hurayth, Marhab's brother, rushed towards Imam Ali (ʿa) shouting loud cries for combat. His cry was so scary that the soldiers following Imam Ali (ʿa) involuntarily returned back and Hurayth, like a roaring lion, rushed to attack him, but hardly a moment had passed when his dead body laid upon the ground.

The death of his brother filled Marhab with the frenzy of revenge and, wearing his coat of steel and placing a piece of stone under his steel helmet, rushed towards Imam Ali (ʿa).**Error! Bookmark not defined.** Both started to recite epic verses about themselves. Exchange of strokes of swords created fear in the hearts of other warriors present on the battle scene. Suddenly, Ali's sword struck Marhab's head, throwing him upon the ground. Jewish warriors standing behind Marhab started fleeing, but a group of them offered stiff resistance to Imam Ali (ʿa), fought a hand to hand combat, and all of them were killed miserably.

Finally, Imam Ali (ʿa) decided to enter the fort but its mighty gate prevented him. With special power from God, he succeeded in plucking the

gigantic gate of Khaybar from its hinges and throwing it upon the moat, providing an opportunity for the soldiers to enter the fort. In this manner, he completely annihilated the last den of conspiracy and danger and relieved Muslims permanently from the sedition of these dangerous and mischievous enemies who possessed unmitigated hatred toward Islam and Muslims.(1)

*Position of Imam Ali**Error! Bookmark not defined.* to the Holy Prophet

One of three distinctions of Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** of which Saʿd reminded Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was presented here in detail. It would also be fitting to discuss the two other distinctions in summary. One of epic distinction of Imam ʿ Ali (ʿa) is that he was at the service of the Holy Prophet (s) in all the battles except the Battle of Tabuk, when the Prophet (s) ordered him to remain in Medina as his successor. The Holy Prophet (s) was informed that the hypocrites had planned a mutiny after his departure from Medina. Therefore, from this consideration, he said to Imam Ali (ʿa), "You are the guardian of my family, my relatives and the group of immigrants, and no one has the merit for this task except me and you."

The presence of Imam ʿ Ali (ʿa) in Medina made the hypocrites' plot impossible to do; therefore, they immediately started spreading rumors that relations between the Imam (ʿa) and the Prophet (s) had become strained, and Imam Ali (ʿa) had refused to participate in this campaign because of long distances and intense heat. In order to respond to this new development, Imam Ali (ʿa) followed the Prophet (s) and informed him about the situation. He proclaimed for all to hear the historic statement that Saʿd had wished to have been said about him. The Holy Prophet (s) announced, "O Ali! Are you not happy that your position with me is like the position of Aaron with Moses? However, there is no prophet after me."

This narration is termed *Tradition of Status* that confirms all the positions held by Prophet Aaron for Imam Ali (ʿa) except prophethood, which had been closed forever. This tradition is a continuous Islamic narration that has been presented by all historians and transmitters of Prophetic traditions.

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(1) Narrators and historians have comprehensively presented the epic victory of Khaybar with exact details of Imam Ali's entrance and other incidents of this period of Islamic history. Interested readers are advised to refer to all reference books of the Holy Prophet's traditions and biography.

Mubahalah

The third distinction that Sa'd mentioned was the incident of the mutual imprecation between the Holy Prophet (s) and the Christians of Najran. Having argued with the Prophet (s) about their false beliefs of Christianity, they refused to accept Islam but announced their acceptance for cursing each other in order that God would pour down His wrath on the lying party. The time of imprecating God's curse upon the lying party finally arrived. The Holy Prophet (s) selected only four people in order to participate in this historic episode, and these four people were none except Imam Ali, Lady Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn ('a). Among all Muslims, the *selves* containing the purest and firmest faith were only those four.

The Holy Prophet traveled the distance between his home and the appointed place in a special manner. He carried al-Husayn ('a) in his arms, held al-Hasan's hand, while Fatimah and Ali followed behind. He entered the designated place and before entering inside its surrounding, he said to his family members, "When I start invoking God's curse upon the lying party, you should support my prayer with your Amen!" The illuminated face of the Holy Prophet (s) accompanied with four others who represented the branches of his own holy existence created such confusion among the Christians of Najran that their Archbishop said, "I can see faces that if they raise up their hands towards heaven to curse, this plain would turn into a horrible burning hell and the skirt of divine punishment would stretch until the land of Najran." Thereupon, they refused to engage in cursing and accepted to pay the prescribed tax.

A'ishah narrates: "On that day, the Prophet (s) covered his four fellow companions with a black cloak and recited this Quranic verse: *God's wish is but to remove uncleanness from you, O folks of the Household, and cleanse you with a thorough cleansing*. [33:33]"

Al-Zamakhshari**Error! Bookmark not defined.** narrates: "The episode of the mutual imprecation of God's curse upon the lying party and the context of this Quranic verse are most authentic witnesses regarding the People of the Cloak (i.e. the Holy Prophet, Imam ' Ali, Lady Fatimah, Imam al-Hasan, and Imam al-Husayn) and are considered as a live document regarding Islamic principles."

THE JUSTICE THAT PERMITS NURTURING OF ENEMIES

Those who pursue a sacred goal and endeavor day and night in order to accomplish it cannot remain neutral towards affairs that are in direct conflict with their cherished objective. These people succeed with the support of a group but are always confronted with the opposition of another group. Righteous, enlightened and open-minded people are charmed by their justice and firmness, while ignorant and avaricious people are annoyed by their justice and implementation of strict regulations.

There is a group that accepts both good and evil warmly, cooperates with Muslims as well as non-Muslims and does not create enmity with any group. However, reconciliation with all groups demonstrates nothing but sedition and duality. During the reign of Imam Ali (ʿa), a commander of a certain area praised himself saying that all classes are happy with him. Imam Ali (ʿa) replied, "This indicates that he is not a just person, because the approval of all classes indicates his being unjust; otherwise, all the people would not have been happy with him."

Imam Ali (ʿa) was one of those men who won the love and admiration of all righteous seekers of justice, while he ignited the fire of rage in the chests of greedy law-breakers and the wretched elements of the society. This justice and firm commitment of Imam Ali (ʿa) was not limited to the period of his government. A majority of narrators who speak about the piety and justice of the Imam (ʿa) base their opinion on the events that occurred during the period of his government, because the opportunities to demonstrate these exalted human virtues were more easily available during this period. But justice and its fair execution, as well as his strict commitment to respecting rules since the time of the Prophet (s), was always spoken about by both ordinary and special people.

Very often, people who did not have the capacity to tolerate Imam Ali's administration of justice approached the Holy Prophet (s) to complain against him, and they were encountered with quite the opposite response. The Holy Prophet (s) thus declared, "Ali does not differentiate between people while executing God's regulations."

Some important incidents shed light on this aspect; so, we are presenting two of them:

1. In they year 10 A.H, the Holy Prophet (s) decided to go on pilgrimage to the House of God; so, he dispatched Imam Ali (ʿa) with a group of Muslims to Yemen. Imam Ali (ʿa) was assigned with the responsibility of collecting clothes from the Christians of Najran that they had promised on the Mubahalah Day and present it to the Holy Prophet (s) on his return from Yemen. Having accomplished his assignment successfully, he learned that the Holy Prophet (s) had left for Mecca; so, he changed the direction of his return journey. He traveled speedily in order to reach the Prophet (s) as soon as possible. He handed over the collected clothing to one of his deputy officers and went ahead of his soldiers to meet the Prophet (s) in the vicinity of Mecca.

The Holy Prophet (s) was very happy at seeing him in the uniform of pilgrimage and therefore inquired what he had made his intention for the pilgrimage. Imam Ali (ʿa) replied, "At the time of wearing the pilgrimage garb, I prayed: O God, I am wearing it with the same intention that the Prophet has intended it at the time of wearing it."

Imam Ali (ʿa) reported about the clothing that he had brought during his journey of Yemen and Najran and, obeying his instructions, returned towards his soldiers in order to return to Mecca again in their company. When Imam Ali (ʿa) returned to his soldiers, he saw that his deputy officer had distributed all the clothes among the soldiers, and they were wearing them as their pilgrimage garb. Imam Ali (ʿa) was displeased and he asked his deputy why he had distributed it before they were handed over to the Holy Prophet (s). He replied that the soldiers insisted that the clothes should be distributed among them as a trust and later collected after the Hajj ceremonies. Imam Ali (ʿa) did not accept his excuse, saying that he did not have any such authority. Then, he ordered all the pieces of clothing to be collected from all the soldiers to be handed over to the Prophet (s) in Mecca.

The group, unhappy with the execution of a fair system organized in an orderly manner, desired that all affairs should be managed in accordance to their personal preferences, so, they went to the Holy Prophet (s) and complained against Imam Ali's strict and firm discipline in managing affairs. They did not realize that any law-breaking unfair flexibility would eventually lead to a series of unlawful acts of greater magnitude. The Imam explained that a person who commits a mistake, which he regards as small, is like a horse rider who carelessly rides a rebellious and unbridled horse. Such a mutinous mount would ultimately throw its rider upside down inside the deep and dark mountainous valleys.

The Imam's analogy meant that every sin, no matter how small it may be, if regarded as nothing, would motivate a person to commit greater sins, and never leave a human being without drowning him in greater sins and ultimately throwing him inside the deep and dark valleys of hell. Therefore, from day one, piety should be practiced and opposition of Islamic regulations should be dealt with strictly.

The Holy Prophet (s) was thoroughly aware of Imam Ali's sense of fairness, so he sent one of his companions to the complaining group to deliver this message to them: "Stop speaking ill about Ali (ʿa), because he is very strict and disciplined in implementing God's command; while flattering and appeasement does not exist in his life."

2. Khalid ibn al-Walid was one of the powerful Quraysh warriors. He migrated in the seventh year after the Prophet's immigration from Mecca to Medina and became a Muslim. However, before his acceptance of monotheism, he participated in the wars waged by the people of Quraysh to overthrow the newly established Islamic government. He was responsible for waging the surprise attack in the Battle of Uhud. Even after accepting Islam, he did not overcome his earlier enmity against Imam Ali (ʿa) and always envied his strength and unique bravery. After the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s), by orders of the caliph, he was assigned to kill Imam Ali (ʿa), but it did not work due to certain reasons. Ahmad ibn Hanbal states in his book *al-Musnad*: "The Holy Prophet (s) dispatched Imam Ali (ʿa) to Yemen with a group of soldiers, including Khalid ibn al-Walid. They fought with the tribe of Banu-Zayd at a certain place in Yemen, defeated them, and captured some spoils of war. The distribution of the spoils of war was not acceptable to Khalid, so, to create a misunderstanding between the Holy Prophet (s) and Imam Ali (ʿa), he wrote a letter and gave it to Buraydah to hand over it to the Prophet (s) as soon as possible. Buraydah said: 'I traveled fast to arrive in Medina and presented the letter to the Prophet (s). He handed it over to one of his companions to read it for him. When the letter was read, I noticed signs of anger appear upon the Holy Prophet's face. I was extremely ashamed of bringing such a letter and, in order to clear myself, I explained that I had done such an act on Khalid's command because I had no other option but to follow my superior in the chain of command. After I finished speaking, a deep silence prevailed upon the assembly. Breaking the silence, the Holy Prophet (s) said, Do not commit slander against Ali, because he is from me and I am from him and he is your leader after me.'

Buraydah continued: I was very sorry for my action and felt ashamed and

requested the Prophet (s) to seek repentance for me. He (s) replied that until Ali arrived and gave his permission for such a thing, he would never seek repentance for me. When Imam Ali (ʿa) arrived, I requested him to plead with the Holy Prophet (s) to seek repentance for me."

This incident resulted in Buraydah's cutting his friendship off with Khalid and extending his sincere hand of friendship towards Imam Ali (ʿa). He did not pay allegiance to Abu-Bakr after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s) and was one among the group of twelve people who censured Abu-Bakr and did not recognize him officially.

SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HOLY PROPHET

Imam Ali (ʿa),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** on God's command, conveyed the verses of Surah al-Tawbah (*Bara'ah*) and the special memorandum for uprooting idol-worship during the Hajj pilgrimage forever for all Arabian tribes. In order to discharge this assignment, he stood firmly in the place of the Holy Prophet (s). History confirms that the day the Holy Prophet (s) announced his prophethood, he also declared the vicegerency of Imam Ali (ʿa). During the twenty-three years of his prophethood, the Holy Prophet (s) repeatedly mentioned Imam Ali (ʿa) as his successor to lead the Islamic community, especially to those he considered as potential trouble-makers and adverse opponents. He advised and admonished them and some times even threatened them with divine punishment in case of disobedience. How surprising it was when the chief of Banu-Amir offered to defend his Divine code staunchly on the condition of being appointed as his successor. The Holy Prophet (s) in reply said, "Only God has the power for this decision; and whoever is appointed by Him, will be my successor."

When Hakim al-Yamamah mentioned a similar proposal, the Holy Prophet (s) showed signs of severe anger and firmly rejected his demand. Because of such ambitions, the Holy Prophet (s) introduced Imam Ali (ʿa) as his successor on several occasions and repeatedly informed the community that God had appointed Imam Ali (ʿa) as his successor and vicegerent, and that he did not have any power in this matter. The following incidents make things clearer:

1. The Holy Prophet (s) introduced Imam Ali (ʿa) as his vizier, successor and caliph, when he was commanded by God to invite his own kinsfolk to Islam.

2. The Holy Prophet (s), while going to Tabuk, declared the position of Imam Ali (ʿa) with respect to him to be like the position of Prophet Aaron with respect to his brother Prophet Moses, and emphasized that all positions held by Aaron are true for Imam Ali, except for prophethood.

3. The Holy Prophet (s) told Buraydah and other personalities that Ali (ʿa) was the most deserving person to lead the Islamic community after him.

4. In Ghadir Khumm, and in a gathering of more than eighty thousand Muslims, the Holy Prophet held Imam Ali's hand and declared him as the

next leader, introducing him to the people and explaining their duty to admit of his next leadership.

In addition to the above important historical incidents, the Holy Prophet (s) occasionally assigned some political affairs to Imam Ali (ʿa) and tried his best to prepare the foreground for the Islamic community's acceptance of his leadership after his passing away. The following incident throws light on this effort:

For more then twenty years, Islam was propagated among all Arab polytheistic tribes and a majority of them unanimously admitted that idol-worshipping was nothing but a fallacy of their ancestors. Their false gods were so wretched that they could not perform any task beneficial to others, besides being totally incompetent to defend themselves from any harm. Such helpless gods did not deserve to be worshipped.

Some enlightened hearts had already given up idol-worshipping and become monotheists. After the Holy Prophet (s) conquered Mecca and Islam could be propagated in an open environment, a significant majority of people started breaking idols and becoming monotheists in Hijaz. But it was difficult to renounce ancient customs for some prejudiced and ignorant groups who were not yet prepared to quit following delusions and superstitions.

Finally, the time arrived for the Holy Prophet (s) to destroy every manifestation of idol-worshipping and inhuman behavior by means of military power. Either he or another person should recite the first part of Surah Bara'ah that expresses disgust for polytheists with an eloquent voice in that great congregation of Hajj pilgrimage and warn the idol-worshippers of Arabia to announce their position in this regard within four months. If they accepted monotheism, they would be treated like other Muslims, enabling them to benefit from all the material and spiritual resources of Islam. But if they decided to continue in their stubbornness and arrogance, they should be ready to fight after four months and know that, after that, they would be killed wherever they would be found.

The verses of Surah Bara'ah were revealed at a time when the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** did not have any intention of participating in the Hajj pilgrimage. He had already participated in the Hajj ceremonies in the previous year, the year of Victory of Mecca, and had decided to participate in the pilgrimage the next year, which was later called the Farewell Hajj. He had no choice but to select a person to declare God's message. He called Abu-Bakr and taught him the initial portion of

the Quranic chapter and dispatched him to Mecca accompanied by forty people in order to recite those verses to them on the Eid Day. Abu-Bakr started his journey towards Mecca when suddenly God's revelation descended, commanding the Holy Prophet (s) to recite these verses either personally or send one who was from him as no one else was authorized to undertake this assignment.

The Holy Prophet (s) called Imam Ali (ʿa) and ordered him to immediately follow the path of Mecca, find Abu-Bakr on the path, take the verses form him and explain to him that God had commanded the Prophet (s) that either he himself or some person from his family should recite these verses before the people and, therefore, he had been appointed for this assignment. Imam Ali (ʿa), accompanied by Jabir and a group of the Holy Prophet's companions, mounted the Prophet's special camel and proceeded towards Mecca to deliver the message to Abu-Bakr, who, handed over the verses to Imam Ali (ʿa).

Imam Ali (ʿa) entered Mecca and on the tenth day of the month of Dhu'l-Hijjah, stood upon a statue there known as al-ʿAqabah and recited the thirteen verses from Surah Bara'ah as well as the Holy Prophet's memorandum of four clauses, loudly enough for all the people congregated there. The polytheist understood clearly that they had been given only four months to finally declare their position to the Islamic government. The verses of the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet's memorandum influenced them in a strange way and before the end of four months, group by group started accepting the code of monotheism. Before the end of the tenth year after the immigration, polytheism in Hijaz was completely uprooted.

Unjust prejudices

When Abu-Bakr learned about his dismissal, he returned to Medina irritated, and complained to the Holy Prophet (s) in the following way**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "You assigned me to recite the verses of the Quran and your memorandum and considered me deserving and worthy for this assignment, but soon you dismissed me. Did you receive an order from God about this matter?"

The Holy Prophet replied sympathetically that God's angel said that no one else besides me or one from me had the capability for this assignment.[1]

Some prejudiced writers have justified it by saying that Abu-Bakr

(1) Al-'Alusi, *Ruh al-Maʿani*, Commentary on Surah Bara'ah, 45.

manifested compassion and mercy, while Imam Ali (ʿa) manifested strength and courage. In their opinion, a recital of those harsh verses and the memorandum required the strong heart and courage manifested by Imam Ali (ʿa); therefore, he was selected for the assignment and Abu-Bakr dismissed.

This justification is neither valid nor fair. Ibn Kathir has analyzed this episode in a different manner. He writes: “It was the traditions among Arabs that whenever someone wanted to break a contract, it had to be broken by the same person or a person from his family and therefore Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was appointed.”

The inadequacy of the above justification is quite explicit, because the basic aim of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** for dispatching Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was not only to recite the verses and announce the memorandum of breaking existing treaties, but the fourth verse of Surah Bara'ah clearly meant that treaties with people who sincerely respected their provisions would be honored till their term. Therefore, even if breaking of treaties was supposed to be considered as part of this assignment, it was a secondary issue. The main objective was that idol-worshipping should be declared as unlawful and an unpardonable sin.

A fair and neutral judgment about this historical episode shows that the Holy Prophet (s), according to God’s command, had the objective to keep Imam Ali’s presence felt during his own lifespan so that Muslims should become aware that after the Prophet (s) they were supposed to resort to Imam Ali (ʿa) in political and governmental affairs, and that there was none more deserving than Imam Ali (ʿa) for this noble task. They clearly saw that the only person appointed by God Almighty to terminate the immunity for the polytheists of Mecca, which was clearly a governmental assignment, was none except Imam Ali (ʿa).

PLANNING THE FUTURE OF MUSLIMS

Our aim here is to find out how the Islamic movement was planned to be preserved after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s) so that his death would not result in a standstill or retrogradation. There were two ways of achieving the goal. Each will be discussed in detail.

1. The first was that the intellectual and logical development of the Islamic community would reach a level which would enable them to lead the newly implanted Islamic movement in a manner exactly like the one during the period of prophethood**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. They could protect it from all sorts of deviation and motivate the future generations towards the straight path. After the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s), the overall leadership of the Islamic community fell hostage to conditions that left a majority of the people unqualified for this responsibility. Any founder of a revolution cannot bring about a profound transformation in the heart of a community in one or ten years of his life nor accomplish this objective in a short period.

The permanence of a revolution and its deep penetration among people's hearts can be possible only if an exalted personality or personalities take over the movement's affairs in hand and with diligent supervision and continuous propagation, protect the society from all sorts of undesirable deviations until the time that a generation passes away and a new generation fully familiar with Islamic ethics and etiquette replaces the earlier generation.

Islam possessed such exalted personalities for the continuity of the movement. It had descended upon a people who were most backward compared to other people of the world and socially, morally and intellectually, were totally deprived of culture and civilization. They were ignorant of all religious traditions except the Hajj ceremonies, which they had inherited from their ancestors. The teachings of Moses and Jesus had not reached their land and the majority of the people in Hijaz were ignorant about them. On the contrary, belief in the customs, traditions and superstitions of the period of paganism was profoundly rooted in their hearts, souls and psychology.

All kinds of religious movements are possible among such nations, but their preservation and continuation requires intense efforts and continuous guidance in order to protect them from all sorts of deviation and retreat.

The tragic episodes of the battles of Uhud and Hunayn, in which the followers dispersed from around God's Messenger and left him alone in the battlefield, is a clear indication of the faith and intellect of the companions. They had not reached the level where the Prophet (s) could make them responsible for managing the affairs of state and destroy the plots of the enemy to kill the Prophet (s). Delegating the task of selecting their leader to the community would not have satisfied the objective of the Holy Prophet.

2. The other option was that God Almighty would select a person to lead the movement who possessed the level of faith and belief just like the Prophet (s) so that by the radiance of his strong faith, vast knowledge, immunity from all sorts of negligence and mistakes, the movement's preservation would be guaranteed forever.

This is the essence of the Shiite claims. Its authenticity, continuity and plenty of historical evidence proves that the Holy Prophet (s) untied the knot of this complex puzzle and, by appointing his own successor and vicegerent by God's permission, guaranteed the eternal continuity of Islam.

Two Points of View about the Leadership

For the Shiah, caliphate is a heavenly position bestowed by God Almighty upon the most deserving and intelligent person of the Islamic community. The clear difference between Prophet and Imam is that a Prophet is the founder of an ideology, recipient of revelation and possessor of a scripture; while an Imam is not required to possess any of these. He is an authentic intellectual and an authority on explaining that part of the religion that the Prophet did not have an opportunity to fully explain; therefore, he left the task to his divinely appointed successor. From the Shiah point of view, a caliph is the leader of an Islamic State who is not only responsible for the execution of laws and for safeguarding its rights and boundaries, but also for clearly explaining doubtful areas in complicated religious issues and compliments those parts of the rules and regulation that due to some reasons were not clearly explained by the founder of the religion.

According to Sunni intellectuals, caliphate is an ordinary and temporal position whose aim is nothing but to guard the physical boundaries of the state and manage the material affairs of Muslims. The caliph of the time is selected by popular opinion. Explaining obligatory commands is the responsibility of religious scholars and intellectuals. They solve such issues according to their own jurisprudence. This difference of opinion about the essential nature of caliphate created two opposite camps of Muslims, dividing them into two sects that continue till today.

According to the former point of view, the imam is a partner of the prophet, and the qualifications required for a prophet are also required for the imam. These qualifications are:

1. The prophet should be infallible. He should not have committed a sin throughout his lifetime and should not make any mistake in explaining religious rules and regulations and in replying to religious inquiries.

2. The prophet should possess full knowledge about religious issues and regulations.

3. Prophethood is a divinely appointed position and it cannot depend on popular election. The prophet is appointed by God Almighty as His representative. He is the only one who can differentiate between the fallible and the infallible and He Alone knows who possesses complete knowledge about religion and human affairs.

These three qualifications are prerequisites for the prophet's successor and vicegerent. On the basis of the latter opinion, none of these conditions is required for the imam. In their opinion, an imam does not need to possess infallibility or knowledge; and is not appointed by God; it is sufficient for him to manage the affairs of the Islamic state using his own intelligence or through consultation with other Muslims. He should provide security through implementation of laws and endeavor to expand the domain of Islam by carrying out campaigns against nonbelievers.

We need to solve the issue: Is the Imam divinely appointed, elected, or selected? Was it required from the Prophet (s) to appoint him by himself or to leave the matter to the discretion of the Muslim community?

There is absolutely no doubt that Islamic ideology is a universal one and is the religion of the last heavenly appointed messenger of God Almighty. When the Holy Prophet (s) was alive, leadership was in his hands; and after his passing away, it should have been handed over to the most deserving person in the Islamic community. Two opinions prevail on whether he should be divinely appointed or elected by the people.

The Shiah believe that leadership is appointed and therefore the Prophet's successor had to be appointed by God Almighty; whereas Sunnis believe that the Islamic community should select or elect one for managing leadership affairs of the country. Each group has proofs and arguments in support of their belief which exist in their books. What is needed here is an analysis of the state of affairs during the Prophet's time that might prove the authenticity of one opinion over the other. The external and internal

politics of Islam during the time of the Holy Prophet demanded that his successor should be appointed by him according to the Will of God Almighty.

The Islamic society was constantly under the severe threat of war, conspiracies, and internal sedition from the dangerous triangular enmity of Rome, Persia and the hypocrites. Expediency required that the Prophet (s) should have created solidarity among the entire Islamic community as a single front of defense against the external and internal enemies by appointing the political leader after him.

One line of this dangerous triangle consisted of the Roman empire that was firmly positioned in the north of the Arabian Peninsula and the Prophet (s) remained very anxious about this severe threat until the very last moment of his life. The first military engagement between the Muslim and Christian armies took place in 8 A.H. in Palestine**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. This confrontation resulted in the martyrdom of three great commanders of Islam; i.e. Jaʿfar ibn Abi-Talib, Zayd ibn Harithah and Abdullah ibn Ruwahah, and resulted in the defeat of the Muslim army.

The defeat of Muslims created the fear that the capital of the newly established Islamic government would be attacked by the powerful enemy at any moment. Therefore, the Holy Prophet (s) led a great army towards the Syrian coast to encounter any military action under his own personal command in 9 A.H. After this painful journey, the Islamic army was able to regain its old prestige and restore its political existence. But this relative victory did not satisfy the Prophet (s); and a few days after his sickness, he ordered the Islamic army, under the command of Usamah ibn Zayd, to march toward the Syrian coast and strictly ordered all to be present on the battlefield.

The second line of the triangle was the emperor of Persia. Khosrow tore the Holy Prophet's blessed letter and treated his ambassador insultingly and forced him to leave his palace and country. He even wrote a letter to the governor of Yemen ordering him to arrest the Prophet and, in case of his refusal to submit, execute him. Although Khosrow died before the Holy Prophet (s), the independence of Yemen, a Persian colony, was always an issue for the Persian kings, and the arrogance and pride of Persian politicians never allowed them to tolerate the existence of any other power.

The third danger was that of the hypocrites who were waiting for an opportunity to strike. They decided to terrorize the camel of the Prophet (s) on the narrow path of the mountain while returning from the Battle of

Tabuk. They thought that with the passing away of God's Messenger (s), the Islamic movement would end and all of them would be relieved. After the passing away of the holy Prophet (s), Abu-Sufyan**Error! Bookmark not defined.** planned an ominous plot and offered allegiance to Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to create a face-to-face confrontation of the two opposite group of Muslims. But Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, thoroughly aware of his filthy intentions, rejected his proposal and said, "By God! You have no objective except to create sedition and corruption and it is not only today that you want to ignite the fire of evil; rather, you have tried repeatedly to create sedition. Know it that I do not need your help."

The power of the hypocrites to sabotage Islam was so great that the Holy Quran mentioned it innumerable times in many of the Quranic chapters.

In spite of the existence of such powerful enemies who were lying in ambush, was it possible that the Prophet did not appoint his successor? Social reckonings of the time clearly reveal that the Holy Prophet (s) could have prevented all sorts of schism and discord after his death and ensured Islamic unity forever by appointing a leader in his lifetime. Prevention of all types of undesirable incidents, after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s), and each group claiming leadership for his own tribe, would not have been possible if the leader had been appointed.

Due to these reasons, the Holy Prophet (s), from the first days of his Prophethood and up to the last moment of his life, repeatedly mentioned his successor openly.

The day when he was commanded by God Almighty to warn his kinsfolk of divine punishment and invite them to accept monotheism, he addressed an assembly of forty-five chiefs of the Banu-Hashim, thus: "The first person among you to support me will also be my successor and vicegerent among you." When Imam Ali (ʿa) stood up and testified to his prophethood, the Holy Prophet (s) looked toward the assembly and said, "This young man is my brother, successor and vicegerent."

This tradition, which is famously known as *Hadith al-Dar,* has been reported extensively by commentators on the Holy Quran and historians. The Holy Prophet (s) explicitly declared the vicegerency and successorship of Imam Ali (ʿa), but none of these declarations can be compared with the firmness of the *Tradition of Ghadir*.

THE GHADIR KHUMM INCIDENTERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

The Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** went to Mecca in 10 A.H. with the intention of performing the Hajj pilgrimage and in order to teach the Hajj ceremonies by personally performing them. This performance coincided with the last year of his lifetime and was thus named *the Farewell Hajj*. The people who accompanied him were estimated as one hundred and twenty thousand. After accomplishing the Hajj ceremonies, the Holy Prophet (s) started his return journey to Medina. When the caravan reached a plain without water, called *Ghadir Khumm",* three miles away from al-Juhafah, the dispatcher of revelation descended and ordered him to halt. The Prophet (s) ordered everybody to stop so that those who were following behind could join them. The travelers were surprised at this sudden and unexpected order to stop at a waterless place at noon, when the heat of the sun was intense and burning the ground. People started wondering: "An important divine command must have arrived from God Almighty, and its importance has commanded the Prophet (s) to stop everyone at such an undesirable place to declare the divine command." God's command to the honorable Prophet (s) came in the form of the following verse: "*O Messenger! Make known that which has been revealed unto thee from thy Lord, for if thou do it not, thou will not have conveyed His message. God will protect thee from mankind. Lo! God guideth not the disbelieving folk.* [5:67]"

An analysis of the Quranic verse will guide us to the following points:

1. The command given to the Prophet (s) was so profound that the Almighty Lord informed His Prophet that if he would not announce it, this means that he had not discharged the entire message of Islam; and that the duties of prophethood would be completed only through this announcement. It was never meant to refer to other commands in all the verses that had already been communicated to the people.

What this verse meant was that the declaration of that very important matter would complete the divine mission of prophethood, which would not achieve its perfection unless this declaration is made. Therefore, the matter of declaration must have been a most important Islamic principle linked to the other basic and secondary principles after the principle of monotheism and divine prophethood.

2. The Holy Prophet (s) had thought about the dangers that would ensue from that declaration. In order to set his mind at rest, the verse includes the specific sentence: *"God will protect thee from mankind."* We need to analyze the different possibilities assumed by Muslim commentators and historians, and decide which one is closer to the reality.

All Shiah narrators, as well as thirty great Sunni ones, agree that the verse was revealed at Ghadir Khumm**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, through which God commanded the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to introduce Ali (ʿa) as the Leader of the Believers***Error! Bookmark not defined.***. Since the issue of Imam ʿ Ali's vicegerency and successorship to the Prophet (s) was crucial, it justified its declaration as a prerequisite for the completion of prophethood. The honorable Prophet (s) kept postponing its announcement because he knew that it would be terribly unpleasant for a group of people whose age was much more than Imam Ali's**Error! Bookmark not defined.** thirty years.

The blood of the relatives of a majority of people who circled around the Prophet (s) was spilled in battlefronts by Imam Ali (ʿa). The government of such a person over the revengeful group would be extremely difficult. Imam Ali (ʿa) was also the cousin and son-in-law of the Holy Prophet (s) and his appointment as caliph, for some people, would be regarded as biased in favor of family. In spite of these unfavorable circumstances, the Wisdom of God Almighty intended to ensure the steadfastness of Islam with the appointment of Imam Ali (ʿa) and thereby complete the mission of His Prophet (s) by appointing a leader.

The burning sun shone at midday on the eighteenth of Dhu'l-Hijjah upon the land of Khumm**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. A huge group, numbering seventy thousand to one hundred and twenty thousand, dismounted at this place when commanded by God's Messenger (s), waiting impatiently to hear the divine revelation. Due to the intensity of the heat, they placed their cloaks in such a way that half of them covered their heads and half lay under their feet. Suddenly, the call for prayer echoed throughout the plain. People prepared themselves for performing the Midday Prayer after the Prophet (s). Such a magnificent gathering had never been witnessed before that day. Having performed the prayer, the Prophet (s) appeared before the gathering and mounted the high pulpit prepared with the saddles of four camels and delivered the following sermon: "Praise belongs only to God. I seek His help, have faith in Him, rely upon Him and seek His protection from the sedition of our selves and the evil within our characters. There is no guide and helper for those whom

God decides to make deviate; and whoever is guided by God, there is no one to lead him astray. I witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

O people! It is near that I accept His invitation and depart from you. I am responsible and you, too, are responsible. What do you think about me?"

The crowds declared, "We witness that you have propagated God's religion, with respect to us, advised us, were our well-wisher and endeavored a lot in this path; may God reward you with His best blessings."

When the gathering became silent, the Holy Prophet (s) again asked, "Do you bear witness that there is no god except God and Muhammad is His servant and prophet; paradise, hell and death are true and there is no doubt that the Day of Resurrection will arrive and God will resurrect those buried under the dust?"

His companions answered, "Yes! Yes! We bear witness."

The Prophet (s) continued, "I am leaving among you two precious things as my souvenirs; how will you treat them?"

An unknown person asked, "What do you mean by those two things?"

The Holy Prophet (s) replied, "The greater trust is the Book of God; its one end is in God's hand and you are holding the other end. Keep holding on to His Book so that you are never deviated. The smaller trust is my progeny (the Ahl al-Bayt). God has informed me that these two souvenirs shall never be separated from one other until they join me together on the Day of Resurrection. O People! Do not try to lead the Book and my Ahl al-Bayt, nor remain too far behind them, for that would result in your destruction."

Then, the Holy Prophet (s) took the hand of Imam Ali (ʿa) and raised it so high that the whiteness of his armpit could be seen by all people, and every one saw Imam Ali (ʿa) next to the Holy Prophet (s) and identified him well, and understood that the aim of this gathering was related to Imam Ali (ʿa). All of them became eager to listen to what the Holy Prophet had to say. The Holy Prophet (s) then said, "O people! Who is the closer to the believers than themselves?"

They replied, "God and His prophet know this better."

The Prophet (s) continued, "God is my master and I am the master of believers and am superior and have authority over them more than their own selves. O People! For whomever I am the master and leader, Ali is now his master and leader." The Holy Prophet (s) repeated these words three

times.[1]

Then he continued, "O God! Love him who loves Ali; treat as Your enemy whomever considers Ali as his enemy. O God! Help Ali's helpers and make his enemies abased and wretched. O God! Make Ali the axis of Truth."

Then he said, "Those who are present in this assembly are obliged to inform those who are absent about this."

The assembly of people was still at the peak of its grandeur when the Archangel Gabriel (ʿa) descended and gave glad tidings to the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** through the verse: "*I have perfected your religion for you and completed My favors unto you and chosen Islam as the religion for you.* [5:3]."

At this moment, the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** raised his voice with this statement: God is the Most Great. He then declared, "I am thankful to God for He has completed His religion and bounties, and is happy with my prophethood and Ali's vicegerency."

The Holy Prophet (s) then dismounted from his place; and his companions, group by group, offered congratulations to Imam Ali (ʿa) and called him their master as well as the master of all believing men and women. On that occasion, Hassan ibn Thabit, a famous poet, stood up, captured this epic historical incident in the form of the most eloquent poetic verses, and made it eternal:

On the day of Ghadir, their Prophet called them

In Khumm; How great the Prophet's call was!

Saying, "Who is you master and leader?"

They answered and showed no negligence:

"Your Lord is our Master and you are our Leader

And none of us will disobey you in this regard."

He said: "Stand up, Ali, for I will appoint you

The Imam and the guide after me

This is the leader of him whose master was I

Hence, be faithful and sincere followers of him."

(1) According to Ahmad ibn Hanbal, the Holy Prophet repeated these words four times.

And then he prayed: “O God! Support his supporter

And be the enemy of him who will oppose Ali.”**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Whatever has been described above is a summary of this great historical incident documented by Sunni scholars. In Shiite books, this historical epic has been described in greater detail. For instance, al-Tabarsi, in his book *al-Ihtijaj* (1/71-4), has quoted the detailed sermon of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

Ghadir Khumm, an Unforgotten Epic

God Almighty intended that the epic incident of Ghadir Khumm**Error! Bookmark not defined.** should remain alive in human hearts and should be written about in all books of history, Quranic commentary, narrations, discourse and official documents of all centuries. All religious speakers and orators should declare it forcefully in all assemblies and regard it as an undeniable distinction of Imam Ali (ʿa). Poets, inspired by the background of this event, should pay their sincere tributes to the Owner of Vicegerency and compose eloquent verses in different languages of the world.

This incident has become eternal because of the descent of two verses of the Holy Quran at this point. Its existence is thus linked to the Holy Quran and can never be deleted from memory.

Islamic society in the ancient traditions considered it a day of religious celebration. The Shiah Muslims celebrate it as a religious festival and the ceremonies of other religious feasts are also performed on this occasion. Islamic history clearly indicates that the eighteenth of Dhu’l-Hijjah is famous as Eid al-Ghadir Day. Ibn Khillakan reports al-Mustaʿli to say: “In the year 478 A.H. and the eighteenth of the sacred month of Dhu’l-Hijjah, which is the day of the Eid al-Ghadir feast, people paid allegiance to him.”

Al-Ubaydi writes: “Al-Mustazhir bi’llah, the Abbasid ruler, passed away twelve days before the end of Dhu’l-Hijjah of the year 478 A.H. This night was the same night of Eid al-Ghadir.”

Al-Masʿudi and al-Thaʿalibi considered it to be a famous night in the Islamic calendar.

The roots of this feast day goes go back to the Ghadir day itself, when the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ordered his companions and wives to visit Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not**

defined. and congratulate him for being blessed with such an epic distinction. Zayd ibn Arqam narrated: "The first persons among the immigrants who shook Ali's hands were Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Abu-Bakr, Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Talhah and al-Zubayr; and the festivities of offering congratulations and allegiance continued until the time of the Evening Prayer."

In order to prove the magnitude of its importance, it is sufficient that one hundred and twenty companions of the Holy Prophet (s) have narrated this tradition. In Sunni books, the names of one hundred and ten are mentioned. It is true that the assembly was of one hundred thousand people, but a large number of them were from the remote areas of Hijaz and no narration has been written by them. Also, a group of people who mentioned this narration has not been documented, or, unfortunately, we do not have access to it. In the year 200 A.H., the period of the scone generation of Muslims (known as *Tabi'un*; i.e. followers), eighty nine of them have quoted this narration.

During later centuries, most of narrators were Sunni scholars and intellectuals and three hundred and sixty of them have narrated this event in their books and a majority of them confirmed its authenticity. To be exact, 92 scholars of the third century, 43 of the fourth, 24 of the fifth, 20 of the sixth, 21 of the seventh, 18 of the eighth, 16 of the ninth, 14 of the tenth, 12 of the eleventh, 13 of the twelfth, 12 of the thirteenth, and 20 of the fourteenth century have narrated this tradition. A group has not only narrated it but also mentioned its references and documentations, compiling independent books on this topic.

For instance, al-Tabari, the great scholar, in his book *al-Wilayah fi Tariq Hadith al-Ghadir,* has quoted this narration from the Holy Prophet (s) through seventy different chains of authority. Ibn Aqd al-Kufi, in his book *al-Wilayah*, has quoted this tradition from one hundred and five people. Abu-Bakr Muhammad ibn Umar al-Baghdadi has narrated it from twenty five people. The number of people who have written separate books about this epic is twenty six. Shiah scholars have written precious books but the most famous and comprehensive one among them is the encyclopedic one entitled *al-Ghadir*, written by the powerful pen of a most eminent Islamic scholar, Allamah Ayatollah al-Amini, and a lot of readers have learnt about the life of Imam Ali (ʿa) from this blessed book .

THE LIFE OF IMAM ALI

AFTER THE PASSING AWAY OF THE HOLY PROPHET UNTIL HIS CALIPHATE

TWENTY FIVE YEARS OF SILENCE

Three parts of Imam Ali's life consisted of thirty three years, during which he was recognized as the most exalted hero, superior leader and radiant face of Islam. After the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s), there was no one more pious, virtuous, wise, knowledgeable, and caring for the impoverished masses than Imam Ali (ʿa). Apart from Hijaz and Yemen, words of his courage, heroism, valor, and intense love for the Prophet (s) were upon the tongues of people everywhere in the Islamic domain.

Logically, a person like Imam Ali (ʿa) should have been the axis of Islam and center of administrative activities in the Islamic society after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s). But when the pages of history are turned, they reveal something exactly opposite. Due to some unusual circumstance that were prevailing, Imam Ali (ʿa) retired from the social arena and preferred silence in the fourth part of his precious life; a quarter of a century. Neither did he participate in any war, nor deliver any speech officially in any congregation. He put his sword in its sheath and kept himself busy providing guidance to others.

This prolonged silent sitting in an isolated corner for a personality that was the central pivot of society, second only to the most important person of Islam and regarded as the most strategic pillar of Muslims, was not so easy and pleasant. The exalted soul of Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** demonstrated complete control upon his self and adapted to the new circumstances that were in total contradiction with the past era. Imam Ali's contributions during this period can be summarized as follows:

1. **Worship of God**, that was worthy of a personality like Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, to the extent that Imam al-Sajjad (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** considered his astonishing night vigils, when compared to his great grandfather, as nothing or worthless.—

2. **Commentary on the Holy Quran completed**, with difficult verses explained clearly and a pupil like Abdullah ibn Abbas, who is regarded as the greatest commentator of Islam after the Imam (ʿa) taught and trained.

3. **Replying to the intellectual queries** of people from near and far, especially Jews and Christians, who **Error! Bookmark not defined.**visited Medina and raised questions that no one except Imam Ali (ʿa), who was an authority upon the Torah and the Evangel, could answer satisfactorily. If this vacuum had not been filled by Imam Ali (ʿa), Islam

would have suffered a terrible defeat. When he offered explicit and detailed replies for all questions, a cheerfulness and astonishment could be seen upon the faces of the caliphs who were sitting in the place of the Holy Prophet (s).

4. **Issuing judgments** upon newly raised issues that were not encountered in the past and no clear verdict was available from the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet's traditions. This was one of the most sensitive contributions of Imam Ali ('a). If there were not a personality like Imam Ali ('a), who was familiar with legal judgments according to the testimony of the Holy Prophet (s), many of the issues in the beginning of Islam would have remained unresolved mysteries and blind knots.

These new issues required an infallible and knowledgeable leader like the Prophet (s) who understood the fundamental principles and secondary issues of Islam perfectly; his extensive and profound knowledge could prevent the Islamic community from following undesirable deviations based upon assumptions and unfounded analogy. Among all the companions of the Holy Prophet, no one possessed this great divine grace except Imam Ali ('a). A portion of the Imam's legal judgments and ingenious explanations of divine verses has been recorded in books of traditions and history.

5. **Offering solutions to political issues and other problems** that reached dead ends. Imam Ali ('a) was the only single trustworthy advisor who was able to remove the difficulties and offer the most feasible solution to them. Some of these consultations have been documented in *Nahj al-Balaghah* and other books of history.

6. **Training a group of pious souls** who were prepared to undertake spiritual journeys under the radiant spiritual leadership of Imam Ali ('a) to conquer peaks of esoteric knowledge and see with the inner eye of the heart what could not be seen with the physical eye.

7. **Providing the needs of the impoverished, poor and helpless people.** Imam Ali ('a) planted gardens with his own hands and excavated water aqueducts for their irrigation and then gave them away as public endowments in the path of God.

These were his indispensable contributions to Islam during this quarter of a century. Unfortunately, it must be said with bitter regret that great Islamic historians have not assigned any importance to this part of the Imam's life nor recorded the details of his life during this period. Is it not a

terrible tragedy that the accomplishments of the twenty five years of Imam Ali's life should remain hidden in ambiguity?

On the contrary, they have described the lives of the tyrannical Umayyad rulers, in great detail, without leaving a single stone unturned. While oppressed historians have written the minute details of the merrymaking and drinking assemblies of the sons of Muʿawiyah, Marwan and the Abbasid caliphs and the poetic verses which were recited in praise of them have been recorded completely, to reveal the picturesque details of obscene talks and vulgarities exchanged between musicians and caliphs in the darkness of night, to be registered in the name of *History of Islam* in their own books?!

Beside this part of their lives, the details of the lives of people behind the scene, the exact number of sheep and cattle they owned, their jewelry, and the fashion styles of their concubines, have all been recorded comprehensively. But when they describe scenes of the lives of God's saints and righteous individuals, it seems as though their pens became heavy with chains, and like a traveler in a rush, they have tried to speedily close up this chapter of history.

First Page Opens

The first page of this chapter opens the moment the blessed head of the Holy Prophet was upon the chest of Imam Ali (ʿa) and his soul joined eternity. Imam Ali (ʿa) has described the details of this incident in his own historical sermon, as follows: "The Companions of the Holy Prophet, who are the memorizers of his life history, know it very well that I have never disobeyed God and His Prophet even for a moment. In fighting against enemies when the heroes fled retreating, I did not care for my own life. The Holy Prophet died when his head was laid upon my chest and it was upon my hand that his soul was separated from his body and I rubbed my hand over my face as a blessing. Then I washed his blessed body while angels helped me in this task; a group of them descended and a group of them ascended towards heaven, and their murmuring of prayers upon his body was continuously heard by my ears until his body was placed in his grave. No one in the life and death of the Holy Prophet is more deserving and worthy than me."

The passing away of the Holy Prophet (s) silenced one group, while the other group started implementing their mysterious secret plots. After the death of the Holy Prophet (s), the first incident that was encountered by Muslims was the denial of his death by Umar! He created a bizarre scene in

front of the Prophet's home, threatening people if they said that the Prophet (s) was dead. Even recitals of verses of the Holy Quran, proving the death of the Prophet (s) by Abbas and Ibn Umm-Maktum were not effective, until his friend Abu-Bakr, who was outside of Medina, finally returned and having heard the news, recited the same verses earlier recited by others, and silenced Umar!

Imam Ali (ʿa) was busy performing the bath of the Holy Prophet (s) with a group of companions helping him, patiently waiting for the completion of his funeral arrangements and preparing to offer the funeral prayers upon his sacred body. Suddenly, uproar from "Saqifah of Banu-Saʿidah" to select the successor to the Holy Prophet (s) was heard. This act was first initiated by the Helpers, but when Umar, Abu-Bakr, and Abu-Ubaydah, who were from the Emigrants, learned about this meeting, they left the body of the Holy Prophet (s) and joined the assembly of Helpers in Saqifah and after verbal arguments, apparently accompanied with physical clashes, Abu-Bakr, with five votes, was elected as the successor to the Holy Prophet (s), while nobody from the Emigrants except those three was aware about his selection.

Abu-Sufyan, who was a true politician, knocked at the door of Ali's home and, in order to create division among Muslims, said, "Give me your hand so that I can pay allegiance to you as caliph of Muslims. When I pay allegiance to you, no one from the children of Abd-Manaf will arise in your opposition, and if the children of Abd-Manaf pay allegiance to you, no one from the people of Quraysh will refuse to pay allegiance to you, thus, all the Arabs will accept you as their leader."

Imam Ali (ʿa) did not even consider Abu-Sufyan's words as he was aware of his intentions. He replied, "Currently, I am busy in the funeral arrangement of the Holy Prophet (s)."

Simultaneously, with Abu-Sufyan's proposal or before it, al-Abbas too requested his nephew to accept his allegiance, but Imam Ali (ʿa) did not pay any attention to his suggestion. It was not too long when the sound of *God is Great* was heard by them. Imam Ali (ʿa) asked al-Abbas about it, and he replied, "Did I not tell you that others would compete with you to seek allegiance? Did I not ask you to give your hand to me for allegiance? But you did not pay any attention to it and now others have taken a lead over you."

Were Proposals of Abu-Sufyan and al-Abbas Realistic?

If Imam Ali (ʿa) had accepted al-Abbas's proposal without delay after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s), a group of personalities would have paid allegiance to him and the assembly at Saqifah would have not been formed at all. Others would not have dared to decide about the important issue of caliphate in a small place belonging to a special group and selecting a person with a few votes. The open invitation of the Prophet (s) to the entire Islamic community compared to the allegiance of few personalities to Imam Ali (ʿa) would have been unrealistic and history would have judged it as it judged the allegiance offered to Abu-Bakr.

Imam Ali's leadership was one of two possibilities: either he was clearly and specifically appointed by God, or not. In the former case, there was no need for seeking allegiance and asking for votes for caliphate and making himself a candidate to occupy this position, which would have been tantamount to showing indifference to the Divine appointment announced by the Holy Prophet (s) on the Ghadir Day. This would have taken the caliphate outside the domain of God and made it an elective position. A righteous person would never undertake such an action for his personal gains, what to speak of an infallible Imam. Assuming the second possibility, the selection of Imam Ali (ʿa) would have been described just like Abu-Bakr's caliphate by his most intimate and sincere friend, the second caliph, after the passage of a long period of time. He said, "The selection of Abu-Bakr as leader was a frantic act done in haste, but God prevented its subsequent mischief."

Abu-Sufyan was not the least sincere in his intentions and his objective was only to create confrontation between two opposite camps of Muslims and take advantage of the muddy waters. He wanted to turn the clock backward towards Arab-paganism and thus destroy the freshly planted sapling of Islam forever. He recited a few verses in his praise and the translation of two of them is presented here:

"O sons of Hashim! Break your silence so that the tribes of Taym and Adi should not greedily eye your right.

The caliphate belongs to you and is for you and except for you, no one is worthy of it."

But Imam Ali (ʿa) pointed to his mischievous intentions and replied, "Whatever your intentions be, I am not interested in them."

Al-Tabari has written: "Ali admonished him and said, 'Your aim is only to

create sedition and disturbance, because you have held a deep grudge against Islam for a long time. I do not need your advice, nor mounted or foot fighters.'"

Abu-Sufyan understood the division that would be caused among Muslims upon the succession to the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and appraised it as: "I saw a storm that would never be silenced with anything except blood." He was absolutely correct and if it had not been for the sacrifices and generosity of the clan of Banu-Hashim, nothing could have stopped the storm except bloodshed.

Revengeful group

Many Arab pagan tribes were famous and well known for their revengefulness and holding of intense grudges in their hearts towards their enemies, and the history of Arab paganism shows that minor incidents resulted in major conflicts, because they never renounced their feelings of revenge. True Islamic teachings made them give up their pagan traditions to a certain extent, but all such sentiments were not completely uprooted from their hearts; in fact, their sense of revenge after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s) could be seen clearly. It was not without logic when al-Habbab ibn al-Mundhir, a powerful man who supported the transfer of the caliphate to the Helpers in the assembly of Saqifah, looked at Umar and said, "We are neither opposed to your leadership nor jealous about it, but we are scared that leadership might fall into the hands of some people whose sons, fathers and brothers were killed by us in wars that were waged to wipe out polytheism and establish Islam. Since the relatives of the Emigrants were killed by means of the Helper's sons and youths, if those people take over power our position will certainly be threatened."

Ibn Abi'l-Hadid has written: "I started reading the Book of *Saqifah* written by Ahmad ibn Abd al-Aziz al-Jawhari, under the tutorship of Ibn Abi-Zayd, the chief of Basra, in the year 610 A.H. When the discussion reached the speech of al-Habbab ibn al-Mundhir, my teacher said, 'Al-Habbab ibn al-Mundhir's forecast was very intelligent, and whatever he was scared of came true during the attack of Muslim ibn Uqbah on Medina, when the city was surrounded by Yazid's army and the Banu-Umayyah succeeded in avenging the blood of their ancestors killed in the Battle of Badr by the sons of the Helpers.' Then my teacher reminded me of another issue as well and said, 'Whatever al-Habbab foretold was also true for the Prophet's clan. He, too, was scared of the revenge and grudge of some Arabs from his own family. He knew that the blood of most of them had been spilled by the

youths of the Banu-Hashim tribe; therefore, he was concerned that if the leadership was taken over by those people, there were chances their revenge and grudge would excite them to shed the blood of the Prophet's clan. This was why he repeatedly recommended Ali as his successor and vicegerent of the community so that the influence of position might protect Ali and his family members. But what happened was that others took over control of affairs, the Prophet's recommendation was not put into practice and what was not supposed to happen did happen, and the most sacred blood from his clan was spilled.'"[1]

Although words of the chief of Basra are not correct from the Shiite point of view, because we believe that the Holy Prophet (s) did not appoint Imam Ali (ʿa) as the leader of community to save his and his family members' blood from spilling, but he did so under God's command, because Imam Ali (ʿa) was worthy of that exalted position. Nevertheless, his analysis was correct. If affairs had remained in the family of Imam Ali (ʿa), the horrible tragedy of Karbala' and the killing of his sons by the Umayyad and the Abbasid rulers would never have been possible and the holy blood of the Prophet's family would never have been spilled by a fistful group of hypocrites.

Meaningful Silence

The passing away of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** left the Islamic community and the Prophet's family to encounter a strange and unforeseen crisis, and there was fear that the flames of internal bloody war could be ignited any moment over the issue of caliphate and successorship to the Holy Prophet, ultimately resulting in the destruction of the newly established Islamic society, returning the recently converted Arabs to paganism and idol-worship. Imam Ali (ʿa) with a large number of sincere companions of the Holy Prophet (s) had yet not completed the burial arrangements of the Prophet (s) when suddenly, two groups of companions proclaimed ownership of the caliphate, creating a bizarre scene of uproar and loud shouting. These two groups consisted of:

1. The Helpers, especially the Khazraj tribe who had assembled at a place called Saqifah of Banu-Saʿidah, decided to assign leadership affairs to Saʿd ibn Ubadah , the chief of their tribe, and appoint him as the successor to the Prophet (s). Since solidarity among the tribes of the Helpers was still lacking and ancient grudges, especially between the Aws and Khazraj

(1) Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* 2/53.

tribes, were not completely forgotten from their memories, they were confronted with internal opposition, because the Aws tribe refused to accept the leadership of Saʿd who belonged to the Khazraj tribe. They not only refused to help him but also showed their inclination towards leadership by an Immigrant.

2. The second group consisted of Emigrants, headed by Abu-Bakr and his supporters. Although this group constituted an absolute minority in the assembly of Saqifah, they, due to reasons pointed out earlier, were able to get a few more votes of the Aws tribe for Abu-Bakr and ultimately emerged as winners, and Abu-Bakr went straight to the mosque to sit on the pulpit of the Holy Prophet (s) as caliph, and invited people to offer obedience and allegiance to him.

Third party and issue of caliphate

Confronting these two parties was a third party that possessed all reasons given by both parties as their right to caliphate. This party consisted of Imam Ali (ʿa), distinguished personalities from the Banu-Hashim clan and a number of real followers of Islam, who considered caliphate as the special right of Imam Ali (ʿa) alone, on the basis of merit. They witnessed with their own eyes the Helpers and the Emigrants engage in dispute with each other about the caliphate while the burial ceremony of the Holy Prophet's blessed body was not yet complete.

This party took asylum inside the house of Lady Fatimah (ʿa) and did not participate in their meetings to openly declare their opposition, and be heard by the Emigrants, the Helpers, and all Muslims. They considered the selection of Abu-Bakr as completely unlawful, because it contradicted the appointment of the Holy Prophet (s) and the principle of consultation. Ultimately, they were forced to quit the home of the honorable daughter of the Prophet (s). Under these circumstances, the third party shouldered a heavy burden of responsibilities.

Imam Ali (ʿa) witnessed leadership, leaving its assigned axis, and knew that the affairs would be taken away from their own axis. Therefore, Imam Ali (ʿa) decided to remain silent, knowing that the silence of a person like Imam Ali (ʿa) would be interpreted by the people of that period, as well as all people of forthcoming periods, as an indication of the illegitimate action of those who proclaimed caliphate.

Finally, he broke the seal of silence and discharged his obligation of reminding the people of the reality by delivering a sermon in the mosque of

the Holy Prophet (s) when he was being forced to pay allegiance to Abu-Bakr. Looking towards the group of the Emigrants, he said: "O group of Emigrants! The foundations of government have been established by the Holy Prophet (s) and no one can take it away from his family to his own home. By God, the family of the Prophet (s) is more deserving for this task, because among them is someone who possesses complete knowledge of the context of the Quran and principles and branches of the religion, is thoroughly familiar with the Prophet's traditions, can manage the Islamic society with excellence, prevent corruption and distribute spoils of war justly. With the existence of such a person, others do not have a chance. Do not allow yourselves to follow the lust and whims of your selves, deviating from the path of God and departing from reality."(1)

According to Shiite tradition, Imam Ali ('a), accompanied by a group of the Banu-Hashim clan, appeared before Abu-Bakr and said, "I was during the life of the Holy Prophet (s) and am after his death more deserving of this position. I am his vicegerent, vizier, treasurer of his mysteries and reservoir of his knowledge. I am the great truthful and the exalted distinguisher. I am the first person to believe in him and testify to him on this path. I was the most steadfast in every campaign against the polytheists, a scholar of the book and traditions of the Prophet (s), the most learned in the principles and branches of the religion, the most eloquent among you in speech, and the most powerful and persistent person during difficult times. Why did you compete with me in this inheritance?"(2)

Imam Ali ('a) considered caliphate as belonging to one who should be the most competent in running the affairs of the country and the most intelligent and learned in the divine obligations; therefore, he said in another sermon, "O people! The most deserving person to govern is the one most competent to manage the affairs and the best versed in divine regulations. If a person who does not possess a combination of these two conditions desires to have the caliphate, he is required to follow the truth, and in case he continues his corruption, he will be killed eventually."(3)

Not only Imam Ali ('a) but also some of his opponents occasionally spoke with an awakened conscience and accepted the merit of Imam Ali ('a) for caliphate, admitting that by preferring others over him they had trampled

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah* 1/11.

(2) Al-Tabarsi, *al-Ihtijaj* 1/95.

(3) *Nahj al-Balaghah*, sermon 168.

his great right. When Abu-Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah learned about Imam Ali's refusal to swear allegiance with Abu-Bakr, he said, "Hand over leadership to Abu-Bakr. May you remain alive and possess a long life, for you are more entitled to leadership with respect to every one because of your epic distinctions, strong belief, vast knowledge, farsightedness to understand realities, vanguardship in Islam and bond of kinship; and as son-in-law of the Holy Prophet (s),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** it is explicitly clear for all."(1)

Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** in trying to reclaim his own right **Error! Bookmark not defined.**met the chiefs of the Helpers to return caliphate to its real axis. Unfortunately, he did not receive a positive response from them. They replied that if Imam Ali (ʿa) had raised the issue of his own caliphate before the others and asked for their allegiance, they would have certainly paid allegiance to him, never left him alone nor paid allegiance to anyone else.

In answer, Imam Ali (ʿa) said, "Was it correct for me to leave the dead body of the Holy Prophet (s) in a corner of my home and start thinking about the caliphate and seeking allegiance?"

The honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet (s) testifying Ali's right said, "Ali is more aware about his obligations than others. The group that has usurped his right will be answerable to God."(2)

It is time to ask what Imam Ali (ʿa) was obliged to do under such sensitive and dangerous circumstances. Was he obliged to remain a silent spectator or rebel?

For Imam Ali (ʿa), there were only two alternatives available; either to rise and repossess his usurped right or to remain silent, renounce all social affairs and pay attention to his individual and ethical obligations. History testifies that an uprising by the Imam (ʿa) under those circumstances was not in the interest of young Islam and the newly established Islamic society; therefore, following the other path was determined and essential.

The Holy Prophet's concerns

1. Quranic verses indicate that the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was seriously concerned that some groups would probably

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasay* 1/12.

(2) *Ibid.* Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.** 2/47.

return to the period of ignorance after his passing away and completely forget the divine traditions. This probability was further strengthened in his mind when in the midst of the battle of Uhud, the rumor of his death was intentionally circulated in the battlefield by the enemy and he witnessed almost all the Muslims fleeing, taking shelters in the mountain and farthest corners, while some of them even decided to secretly communicate with the leader of hypocrites to seek immunity from Abu-Sufyan. Their faith became so weak that they started doubting God Almighty and allowed bad thoughts to enter their minds. The Holy Quran, revealing their behavior, states: "*While the other party who were anxious on their own account, thought wrongly of God, thoughts of ignorance. They said: Have we any part in the cause?*" [3:153]

"*Muhammad is but a messenger; messengers the like of whom have passed away before him. Will it be that, when he dieth or is slain, you will turn back on your heels? He who turneth back doth not hurt God and He will reward the thankful.*" [3:144]

This verse shows the division of the Prophet's companions into two groups: the conservatives, returning to the age of ignorance, and the steadfast and thankful, implying the possibility of Muslims being divided into two sects or groups.

2. Looking at the group that assembled in Saqifah clearly reveals their true natures. The tribal and sectarian prejudices of the pre-Islamic era that were reflected during the words exchanged between them explicitly demonstrated that Islam had not yet reached their hearts and was nothing but a cover for their ignorance.

3. Imam Ali's words point out the importance of Islamic solidarity and the consequences of ominous division. As an example, when Abu-Sufyan wanted to press Imam Ali's hand to offer his allegiance, Imam Ali ('a), looking towards the people, said, "Break the waves of sedition with the boats of rescue. Take precautions from being divided into different groups and remove signs of self-glorification from your heads. If I speak, they accuse me of greed for leadership, and if I remain silent, they accuse me of being scared of death. By God! The son of Abu-Talib loves death more than an infant loves his mother's breast. I am silent because of profound knowledge and awareness that has overtaken me, and had you, too, been aware like me, your condition would have been similar to someone holding

a rope while hanging in the well, trembling with fear and fiercely scared."[1]

4. When the news of the death of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** reached the tribes who had accepted Islam recently, they immediately returned to the codes of their ancestors and practically revolted against the central government and refused to pay Islamic taxes. The prime act that was performed by the central government was to mobilize a group of real and devoted Muslims to fight with the apostates and force them to surrender once more to the central government. As a result, apostate thinking that was spreading quickly among other tribes as well, was uprooted. Apart from becoming apostates, some tribes created another evil in Yamamah and that was claiming prophethood, like Musaylamah, Sijah, and Tulayhah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

Under those circumstances, it was not at all prudent that Imam Ali ('a) should have raised another banner to regain his usurped right. In a letter written to the people of Egypt, Imam Ali ('a) pointed to this point, saying, "By God, I never imagined that the Arabs would take away the caliphate from the Holy Prophet's family and prevent me from it. It was really astonishing for me to see people pressing the hand of someone else for allegiance to his caliphate. Therefore, I restrained my hands. I saw a group of people returning to their earlier ignorance and wanting to erase the heavenly code of the Holy Prophet (s). I was scared that if I did not rush to the help of Muslims and Islam, it would result in the destruction of its image, and this tragedy for me was greater than the government of a few days that, like clouds, disappears quickly. Thus, I decided to fight with those incidents and helped Muslims until falsehood was completely erased, and stability returned to the bosom of Islam."[2]

In the beginning of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s caliphate when the council voted in Uthman's favor, Imam Ali ('a)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** looked to the council members and said, "All of you know very well that I am more entitled to caliphate as compared to others. So far as the affairs of Muslims are heading in the right direction, I will renounce caliphate even though it is oppression against me. If I show my lack of interest in seeking government, it is for the sake of earning divine reward and a bonus that exists on this path."[3]

(1) *Nahj al-Balaghah*, sermon 5.

(2) *Nahj al-Balaghah*, Letter 62.

(3) Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* 11/113.

Ibn Abi'l-Hadid**Error! Bookmark not defined.** has written, "During one of those days when Ali (ʿa) was sitting with his hands folded after his renunciation from caliphate, his honorable wife Lady Fatimah (ʿa) aroused him to retake his usurped right of caliphate. At the very moment, the call for prayer announced loudly, 'I witness that Muhammad is the Prophet of God.' Imam Ali (ʿa) looked to his honorable wife and said, 'Do you want this voice to be silenced upon the earth?' Fatimah replied, 'Never.' He replied, 'Then in that case, the right path is the one that I have selected.'"(1)

Because of the importance of this topic, it has been discussed here briefly. Now, the result of an armed uprising by Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** will be analyzed, presenting authentic documents.

Worth of an exalted goal

There is no social issue more important than the leadership and administration of the society, and in a large congregation only a few people qualify to hold that position. Qualifications of heavenly leaders are greater and their duties more crucial than leaders appointed for the highest office positions on the basis of election of the people. For divine and spiritual leaders, the goal is much higher and dearer than simply securing position and privileges. A spiritual leader is supposed to accomplish his cherished goal. He must renounce the leadership position and regard the goal more sacred if the need arises.

After the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s), Imam Ali (ʿa) realized that if he insisted on taking over the government to secure his own position, it would result in wasting the painstaking efforts of the Holy Prophet (s) and the holy blood that was spilled in the divine path.

Continuation of old revenges

The Muslim society was inflicted with such divisions between two opposite camps that any internal small bloodshed would have resulted in huge explosions inside and outside Medina. A majority of tribes who lived in Medina or its outskirts were unhappy with Imam Ali (ʿa) and carried a deep grudge inside their hearts against him, because he was the one who had annihilated the banner of infidelity and degraded all their heroes. Notwithstanding their strengthening of bonds with Islam later on and showing their apparent inclination towards monotheism and following Islam, they still harbored a deep grudge against Islam. Under such

(1) Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* 11/113.

circumstances, if Imam Ali (ʿa) would have decided to retake his usurped position by means of an armed uprising it would have resulted in the following consequences:

1. In this fight, Imam Ali (ʿa) would have lost a large number of his friends and relatives who believed in his spiritual leadership. Of course, if their martyrdom would have resulted in truth returning to its rightful place, their sacrifices would not have been regarded as tragic and unfortunate, but their deaths would not have returned truth to its actual owner.

2. It would have resulted in killing a large group of the Holy Prophet's companions who were opposed to his caliphate. They would not have given up their resistance easily and Islam would have definitely been weakened at the center. Although this group had opposed Imam Ali (ʿa) in the issue of caliphate, they in other affairs did not have any opposition with him and were regarded as a power against polytheism, idol-worship, Christianity and Judaism.

3. Because of the weakness of Muslims, Arab tribes would have formed a united front with the apostates and enemies of Islam and it was quite possible that the power of the enemies and the lack of correct leadership at the center would have silenced the lamp of monotheism forever.

Imam Ali (ʿa) understood the delicate situation, so he preferred silence over armed rebellion. It would be more appropriate to hear it from Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. Abdullah ibn Junadah has narrated: During the prime days of Ali's leadership, I entered Medina from Mecca, saw that all the people had gathered in the Prophet's mosque and were waiting for the Imam's arrival. After some time, Ali (ʿa) with his sword hanging upon its belt came out of his home. All eyes were fixed upon him until he sat upon the pulpit, and after praising God, said, "O people! Be it known that when the Holy Prophet (s) died, it was required that no one should have stood against me for the government that had been founded by him. They were not supposed to eye it greedily, because I was his successor and guardian and I belonged to his holy progeny. Contrary to expectations, a group of people of Quraysh stretched their hands towards my right and usurped it as their own. By God! Had it not been for the fear of causing a division among Muslims and the return of infidelity and idol-worship in the Islamic countries, my situation would have been entirely different from what you see."(1)

(1) Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* 1/307.

Al-Kalbi has narrated: When Imam Ali (ʿa) entered Basra to suppress the allegiance-breakers Talhah and al-Zubayr, he delivered the following sermon: "When God took up the soul of His messenger, the Quraysh preferred their own interest over me and deprived me of my rights. But I realized that remaining patient and showing statesmanship was far better than creating a division among Muslims and spilling their blood. People had accepted Islam only recently, and religion for them was like a skin water bag full of milk that could have been spilled easily on encountering the slightest negligence by the smallest person."(1)

Ibn Abi'l-Hadid**Error! Bookmark not defined. Error! Bookmark not defined.**writes about the deep-rooted grudge of a group of *Companions* against Imam Ali: "Experience has proved that the passage of time helps forgetting grudges, quenching the fire of jealousy and calming hearts full of revenge. With the passage of time, a generation dies and another takes over as its successor and, therefore, ancient grudges in the form of faded colors are transferred to the later generation. When Imam Ali (ʿa) became caliph, twenty five years had already passed since the passing away of the Prophet (s), and it was natural to expect that during this prolonged period, jealousy and grudges would have been forgotten or decreased to a certain extent. But, quite unexpectedly, the jealousy of Ali's enemies, even after a quarter of a century, did not decrease at all. Even the sons of the Quraysh, their younger generations, who had not witnessed the bloody battles or seen the heroism of the Imam in the wars of Badr and Uhud, possessed a severe grudge towards him and retained their jealousy in their hearts; therefore, when the Imam occupied the seat of caliphate and took control of affairs in his own hands, a fierce fire was ignited inside the hearts of his opponents and such explosions took place that it could result in nothing but annihilation of Islam and return of paganism to Islamic countries."(2)

Imam Ali (ʿa) has pointed out some results of his armed uprising in one of his speeches: "After the passing away of the Prophet (s), I thought profoundly about my duty toward Islam. In facing the battle lines formed by the Quraysh against me, I did not see any helper except my own family. I could not accept their death; so, like an eye with a piece of straw in it and a throat with a bone stuck in it, I tolerated the suffocation for myself and remained patient, encountering episodes that were more bitter than

(1) *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* 8/30.

(2) *Ibid* 11/114.

poison."(1)

Muslim solidarity

Muslim unity was Imam Ali's greatest objective**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. He was aware that this unity was the basis of creating fear in the hearts of the world's emperors during the period of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and had resulted in the unprecedented and sudden expansion of Islam. If this solidarity disappeared, the Muslims would encounter all sorts of problems and divisions, especially because some people of Quraysh were determined to destroy Islam and were simply looking for an excuse to inflict the crucial stroke.

Among the Emigrants, there were excuse-makers like Suhayl ibn Amr, al-Harith ibn Hisham, and Ikrimah ibn Abi-Jahl who were regarded diehard enemies of Muslims but hypocritically had renounced their infidelity, idol worship and accepted Islam. The Helpers, after suffering a defeat at Saqifah, decided to rise in support of Imam Ali (ʿa) and invited people to follow him. These troublemakers were severely angered and demanded the caliph to invite the tribes of Aws and Khazraj to pay allegiance, and if they refused, declare a war against them. All three delivered fiery speeches before a large congregation and Abu-Sufyan**Error! Bookmark not defined.** also joined them! In opposition, the Helpers' speaker, Thabit ibn Qays, stood up to criticize the Emigrants and reply to their speeches.

This verbal battle between the Helpers and the Emigrants, in the form of sermons and poetic recitals, continued for a long period. The context of the speeches and verses of both sides have been described by Ibn Abi'l-Hadid**Error! Bookmark not defined.** in *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* (6/23-45). This makes it explicitly clear why Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** preferred silence over armed rebellion and how, by exercising prudence and patience, led the storm-inflicted boat of Islam to the shore of salvation. During the early days of Saqifah, one of Imam Ali's relatives recited verses in his praise whose translation is given as follows:

I never imagined the usurpation of leadership from the clan of Banu-Hashim and from Abu'l-Hasan.
Was Ali not the first person who performed prayer towards the Holy

(1) *Nahj al-Balaghah*, sermon 26. Similar context has also been mentioned in sermon 212.

Kaʿbah?
Was he not the most knowledgeable among you concerning the Holy Quran and the Prophet's traditions?
Was he not the nearest person to the Prophet?
Was he not the person helped by Angel Gabriel during the Prophet's funeral?

When Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** learned about his verses, he immediately dispatched a messenger to prevent him from reciting them and said, "The solidarity of Islam is far sweeter to me than its being inflicted with division."

During the Battle of Siffin,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** a man from the Banu-Asad tribe asked Imam Ali (ʿa),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** "How did the people of Quraysh deprive you of the position of caliphate?"

Imam Ali (ʿa) became unhappy on hearing this unexpected question, because some of the soldiers of Imam Ali (ʿa) believed in those caliphs, and a discussion of these issues at such sensitive moments would have caused a split and division among their battle lines. Therefore, Imam Ali (ʿa) after showing his unhappiness on such a question, replied, "Respecting your bond with the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and because every Muslim has a right to ask questions, I am replying to your question briefly: Leadership of community belongs to me and my bonds with the Prophet (s) as compared to others were more steadfast, but a group acted greedily and another group closed its eyes. The judge between me and them is God, and all of us will return to Him."(1)

These were some of the reasons behind the silence of Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who renounced his own right for the sake of the safety of Islam and patiently endured all excesses for a period of twenty five years.

(1) *Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.**, sermon 153.

THE REIGNS OF THE FIRST THREE CALIPHS AND IMAM ALI'S LOGIC

Sunni intellectuals who wrote commentaries on *Nahj al-Balaghah* have analyzed the speeches of Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** regarding his entitlement to the leadership and concluded that his aim was to prove his right to caliphate without mentioning the existence of any explicit declaration from the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** about its authenticity.

Since Imam Ali (ʿa) had very close bonds with the Holy Prophet (s), was the most exalted personality in education and knowledge, and the tallest figure regarding execution of justice and governmental affairs as compared to other companions of the Holy Prophet (s), it would have been prudent if the community had selected him for the position of caliphate. However, since the chiefs of the community selected some one else for that position, the Imam complained: "I have always been the most entitled to caliphate and succession to the Holy Prophet as compared to others!"

The right that Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** mentioned that he had been deprived of since the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was not the religious right that was given to him by the Prophet (s); and preferring others over him could not be regarded as a sort of opposition to a religious right. Rather, it was his natural right because leadership affairs should have been handed over to the most intelligent, powerful and experienced person. However, whenever a group for the sake of expediency did not follow this fundamental rule and handed over leadership to a person of lower rank in every way, the superior person has the right to express his grievance: "I swear in the Name of God that since the day He took the soul of Holy Prophet (s) until today, I have been deprived of my right."(1)

Imam Ali (ʿa) uttered these words when Talhah and al-Zubayr raised the banner of rebellion against him and turned the city of Basra into their military garrison.

Imam Ali did not only use his personal superiority as a justification for his fierce attacks against the caliphs, because he also rested his case upon the Holy Prophet's last will. When he introduced the Prophet's family, he said,

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(1) *Nahj al-Balaghah*, sermon 5.

"The Prophet's family is the keepers of his secrets, the shelters of his commands, the reservoirs of his knowledge and wisdom, the guardians of the Scripture and the pillars of his ideology. Not a single person of the community can be compared with them. On them rest the foundations of religion, faith, and certainty. People left behind on the path of truth resort to them and those who are exhausted join them. The specific qualifications of spiritual leadership (education, knowledge) are possessed by them and the Prophet consistently referred to their rights as his inheritors."(1)

Firstly, the Imam (ʿa) emphasizes what the Holy Prophet (s) willed about them. The Arabic sentence: "*walahum khasa'is al-wilayah,"* which means: *"The specifications of spiritual leadership are with them"* clearly recommends their leadership and direct succession to the Holy Prophet, which was officially declared on the Ghadir Day as well as other occasions.

Secondly, competence never creates a right till the people's selection is not attached to it. Imam Ali (ʿa) talks about his confirmed and established right and declares that after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s), his right was trampled upon. If leadership in Islam had been resolved through consultation, discussion and resorting to public opinion, then if the person who possesses outstanding superiority over others is not selected for such a position, he cannot consider himself as the official holder of that position and regard the revoking by the people as a sort of oppression and tyranny towards him and criticize others who have been selected in his place. The tone of Imam Ali (ʿa) in his speeches is quite contrary to it. He considers caliphate as his absolute right and introduces the people of Quraysh as transgressors and claimers of his absolute right. He says in a supplicatory mood, "O God! Please help me against the people of Quraysh and those who supported them. They sheared off their kinship bonds with me, treated my superior position as small, and formed a united front against me for the caliphate which was my absolute right."(2)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Could these harsh words be justified as simply coming from a superior personality in the Islamic community? If the issue of caliphate had to be resolved by resorting to public opinion and consultation with the companions, then why does he say: *They formed a united front against me for the caliphate which was my absolute right*?

(1) *Ibid*. sermon 2.

(2) *Ibid*. sermon 167.

After the incident of Saqifah, Abu-Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah said to Imam Ali (ʿa), "O son of Abu-Talib! How great is your desire to get the caliphate?" Imam Ali (ʿa) replied, "By God, you are more desirous of it than I am; while from its qualifications you are too far away and I am the closest. I demand my own right and you are acting as an obstruction between me and my right."(1)

All these speeches prove that Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** considered caliphate as his absolute right and regarded any sort of deviation from him as a deviation from the truth. Such a right cannot be proved except providing the explicit proof of his being appointed by the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** through a clear divine command. Sometimes, Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** rested his case on the basis of his competence and worthiness and ignored the issue of Divine appointment, including the following speech: "The Holy Prophet's soul was taken away while his head was upon my chest. I bathed his body while the angels helped me. The surroundings of the home echoed with mournful cries. The angels descended in groups to offer prayers and ascended back to heaven and I heard their voices. Thus, who is more deserving than me to be his successor during the life and after the death of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**?(2)

In the sermon known as al-Shaqshaqiyyah,***Error! Bookmark not defined.*** which is considered as one of his most famous sermons, Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** described his superiority over the people, saying, "By God, the son of Abu-Quhafah put the caliphate on his body like a dress, knowing it well that the flour-mill of the caliphate rotated only upon my axis. From the highest peak of my existence, sciences flow downward and the thinking of anyone never reaches near the peak of my intellect."(3)

Sometimes, he counted upon his nearness and kinship with the Holy Prophet (s): "My nobility is higher and I have the closest bond of kinship with the holy Prophet (s)."(4)

Imam Ali's bonds with the Holy Prophet (s) are mentioned for his defense against the logic of the group in Saqifah who announced the reason for

(1) *Nahj al-Balaghah*, sermon 167.

(2) *Ibid*, sermon 192.

(3) *Ibid*, sermon 3.

(4) *Ibid*. sermon 157.

their being elected because of their relationship with the Holy Prophet (s). He learned about their logic and said, “In order to benefit from its fruit, they are counting upon their nearness to the tree.”(1)

(1) *Ibid*, sermon 64.

METHOD OF TAKING ALLEGIANCE FROM IMAM ALI

This part of the history of Islam is the most painful, filling aware hearts with intense sorrow. This part in Sunni books has been mentioned briefly, just summarized, while in books of Shiite scholars it has been covered comprehensively. Perhaps some would desire to hear this act of transgression against the house of Divine Revelation from Sunni narrators. Hence, this part will be presented first purely based upon their references and documents so that doubtful people can believe in this bitter event.

Sunni writers unanimously narrate that it was not much later after the allegiance in Saqifah that the newly selected caliphate decided to seek allegiance from Imam Ali (ʿa), al-Abbas, al-Zubayr and other members of the Banu-Hashim clan so that his caliphate could appear to have the support of all who were indispensable for its legitimacy, and remove any sort of opposition from its path. After the incident of Saqifah, the Banu-Hashim and a group of the Emigrants and supporters of Imam Ali (ʿa) rejected this selection and took refuge in the home of Lady Fatimah (ʿa).**Error! Bookmark not defined.** This house was specially revered like a sanctuary during the period of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. It was meant to forestall any attempt by the newly selected caliphate to dare to transgress upon the house of revelation, pull out the refugees by force from inside and take them to the mosque by force for allegiance.

But ultimately the desire of expansion of power did its task, and reverence for the house of revelation was totally disregarded. The caliph appointed Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** with a group to pull out people who had taken refuge in the house of Lady Fatimah (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** at any price, whatsoever, and force them to take the oath of his allegiance. He, with a group, among whom were Usayd ibn Husayr, Salamah, Thabit ibn Qays and Muhammad ibn Maslamah arrived at Lady Fatimah's home to invite the refugees inside the house to swear allegiance to the caliph, and in case of their refusal, to take them by force to the mosque. Umar shouted loudly in front of the house warning the refuges to leave it as soon as possible. But his crying and shouting did not produce any positive results upon them and they refused to obey his orders.

At this point, he asked for firewood so that he would burn the house and destroy it upon the heads of all of its occupants, but one of his companions

came forward and tried to prevent him from his decision, saying, “How could you burn the house when the daughter of the Prophet (s), Fatimah, is inside?”

Error! Bookmark not defined. Umar replied very coolly, “Fatimah’s presence will not stop me from carrying out this task.”

At that time, Lady Fatimah (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** came behind the door and said, “I do not know of any community whose conduct could be more degraded than yours. You left the dead body of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** among us and went to decided about caliphate yourselves. Why do you want to superimpose your government upon us and not return caliphate to us as our right?”

Ibn Qutaybah narrated: Umar renounced his efforts of forcing the refuges from inside the house, returned to Abu-Bakr and informed him about the situation. Abu-Bakr knew that with the opposition of the very important personalities among the Emigrants and the Banu-Hashim clan, the foundations of his government would never become stable and powerful. This time, he assigned his slave Qunfudh to bring Ali (ʿa) to the mosque. He, too, came near the door of the house and said, “By the orders of the *successor* of God’s Prophet, you are required to come to the mosque!” When Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** heard this sentence from Qunfudh, he replied, “How could you forge a line against the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** so soon? When did the Holy Prophet (s) appoint him as his successor so that he could declare himself as caliph?” The slave, too, returned hopelessly and reported the incident to Abu-Bakr.

The stiff resistance shown by the refugees against these repeated invitations of the newly selected caliphate enraged Abu-Bakr. Ultimately, Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** accompanied a group a second time and came to the house of Lady Fatimah (ʿa). When the honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet (s) heard the loud voices of the attackers, she cried loudly from behind the door and said, “O my beloved father, O Prophet of God, after your demise, severe troubles are being inflicted upon us by the sons of al-Khattab and Abu-Quhafah!”

The wailing of Lady Fatimah was so heart-rending that a group of the people who had accompanied Umar to attack her house changed their minds and returned with sorrow and tearful eyes. But Umar and the rest of the group, who insisted on taking allegiance from Imam Ali (ʿa) and the Banu-Hashim, brought them outside the house by force and insisted on

paying allegiance to Abu-Bakr. Imam Ali (ʿa) said, "What would happen if I refuse to give my allegiance?" They replied, "You will be killed." Imam Ali (ʿa) replied, "Would you dare to kill a servant of God and the brother of the Holy Prophet (s)?"

Imam Ali's stiff resistance in front of Umar ultimately caused them to leave him alone. Imam Ali (ʿa) utilized this opportunity and announced his being oppressed. He immediately went to the grave of the Holy Prophet (s) and recited the same historical sentence that was said by Prophet Aaron (ʿa) to his brother Prophet Moses (ʿa): "O Brother! Lo! The folks did judge me weak and almost killed me. [7:150]"

Judging the Attack upon the House of Revelation

Showing reality and presenting its background, the way it really was makes those people unhappy who favor the implementers of these bitter tragedies. They do not want to show any darkness in their conduct and wish to keep their stature and position intact. Covering up historical incidents, or showing them upside down, is regarded as a sort of treason against history; therefore, a writer possessing freewill would never trample the truth with his own feet nor take part in such treason or shame simply to seek the pleasure of a certain group.

The greatest incident after Abu-Bakr's usurpation of caliphate was the attack upon the house of revelation, the residence of Lady Fatimah (ʿa). An accurate appraisal of this matter would depend upon the selection of authentic documents and after answering three questions judge the incident. The three questions are:

1. Is it true that the caliph's assigned people decided to burn down the house of Lady Fatimah (ʿa)? How far did they advance to accomplish this task?

2. Is it true that Imam Ali (ʿa) was forcefully taken in a shocking and heart-rending manner to the mosque in order to take by force allegiance from him?

3. Is it true that the honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet (s) suffered severe bodily injuries through the attack and suffered a miscarriage due to it?

These three questions are crucial and extremely sensitive in this tragic episode. We will now analyze them comprehensively, based upon the documents of Sunni scholars.

One of the most practiced valuable Islamic educational instruction is that no Muslim is allowed to enter anyone's house except with a permission already obtained, and if the home owner is not prepared and offers an excuse for not inviting the guest inside, the guest should accept it without being annoyed and immediately return from there. Apart from this moral command, the Holy Quran in the following verse has considered every house where the Name of God is invoked and worshipped as respectable: "(This lamp is found) in houses which God hath allowed to be exalted and that His name shall be remembered therein. Therein is praise offered to Him morning and evening. [24:36]"

These houses must be respected because worship of God is performed therein; otherwise, mud mixed with straw does not earn any respect. Among all the houses of Muslims, the Holy Quran announces a special command for the house of the Holy Prophet (s):**Error! Bookmark not defined.** "*O ye who believe, enter not the dwellings of the Prophet, unless permission is granted to you.* [33:53]"

There is no doubt that the house of Lady Fatimah (ʿa) is included with those respected and sacred houses, since she and her children worshipped and praised God therein. It cannot be said that the houses of A'ishah and Hafsah, the Holy Prophet's wives and the daughters of Abu-Bakr and Umar respectively, are the houses of the Prophet (s) while but the house of his exalted daughter, the most honorable lady of the universe, is not.

Investigation of the earliest days of caliphate proves, beyond any doubt, that the people assigned by the selected caliph trampled over all these verses and did not respect the special Divine command for the house of the Holy Prophet (s). Al-Tabari, who favors the caliphs, has written that Umar, accompanied by a group, arrived in front of the house of Lady Fatimah (ʿa) and said, "By God, I will burn this house unless the people who have taken refuge inside leave it to offer allegiance."

Ibn Qutaybah revealed a little more and wrote that Umar not only uttered the above sentence but he also ordered firewood to be placed near the door and added, "By God Who holds Umar's soul in His hand, either you quit the house or I will burn it down." When he was reminded that the honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet (s) was inside the home, he replied, "So, let her be."

Ibn Abd-Rabbih al-Andalusi, in *al-Iqd al-Farid* (2/260) has taken a further step and written, "The caliph assigned Umar to pull the refugees out from the house and, if they offered resistance, wage a war against them. With

this in mind, Umar brought fire to burn the house. At this moment, he encountered Fatimah who said to him, 'O son of al-Khattab, did you come to burn my house with fire?' He replied, 'Yes, except that you must make allegiance with the caliph, like the others.'"

Books of Shiite scholars present the incident explicitly and comprehensively. Sulaym ibn Qays has narrated in detail the attack upon the house of revelation and removed the curtain from the face of reality. He writes: "The caliph's assigned person ignited the fire and applied intense pressure upon the door, entered the house, but encountered the resistance of Lady Fatimah (ʿa)."

The eminent Shiite scholar Sharif al-Murtada has undertaken a profound discussion about the incident, including a narration from Imam al-Sadiq (ʿa) saying that Imam Ali (ʿa) did not agree to offer allegiance until heavy smoke engulfed his entire house.

Here, we will close the boundaries of our discussion about the first question asked about the incident, and leave the judgment to the conscience of the awakened hearts, and continue the incident on the basis of Sunni authentic documents.

How Imam Ali was taken to the mosque

This part of Islamic history, like the earlier part, is heart-rending because it cannot be imagined that a great personality like Imam Ali (ʿa) would be taken to the mosque in a manner that forty years later Muʿawiyah would dare to taunt him about it. In his letter to Imam Ali (ʿa), he wrote: "You refused until the selected caliphate bridled you like a rebellious camel and pulled you towards the mosque for allegiance."

Imam Ali (ʿa), replied, "You accused me of being dragged like a rebellious camel to offer my allegiance. By God, you desired to criticize me, but on the contrary ended up in praising me. Instead of insulting me, you have really insulted yourself. Never is it a shame for a Muslim to be in a state of being oppressed."

Ibn Abi'l-Hadid is not the only one who has narrated this incident; it has also been narrated by Ibn Abd-Rabbih in *al-ʿIqd al-Farid* (2/285) and al-Qalqashandi in *Subh al-Aʿsha* (1/128). Strangely, Ibn Abi'l-Hadid has narrated this exchange of letters between Muʿawiyah and Imam Ali (ʿa) only while commenting on the letter no. 28 of *Nahj al-Balaghah*. Although he does not contradict the authenticity of this incident, he denied the real incident when he concluded his commentary on sermon no. 26, thus: "Such

topics have been narrated only by Shiites and not by others."

*Impertinence towards Lady Fatimah**Error! Bookmark not defined.*

The third question is whether impudence was shown towards the honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet or not? The reply given by Shiite scholars is more painful than the earlier two questions. During their forceful endeavors to take Imam Ali (ʿa) to the mosque for allegiance, they met with stiff resistance from Lady Fatimah (ʿa). During this struggle of preventing them to take her honorable husband to mosque, she was inflicted with severe psychological and physical injuries that cannot be penned without extreme pain and sorrow. However, Sunni scholars, in order to safeguard the position of the caliphs, restrain themselves from analyzing this discussion explicitly just as Ibn Abi'l-Hadid has said that they have been narrated only by Shiite scholars. The most eminent Shiite scholar Sharif al-Murtada has narrated as follows: "In the beginning, narrators and historian did not hesitate from describing the audacity and cruel treatment shown towards the honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet (s) and it was very famous that the caliphs' assigned person pushed the door of her house against her, with the result that she miscarried the child that was in her womb; and Qunfudh, by Umar's orders, lashed Lady Fatimah (ʿa) to prevent her from holding Ali's belt with her hand. Later on, they realized that narrating these incidents were not compatible with the position and situation of the caliphs; therefore, they decided to renounce its narration."

Sharif al-Murtada's statement can be testified by the fact that in spite of their patronage and strict control, this incident can still be found in some of their books. Al-Shahristani quotes Ibrahim ibn Sayyar, famously known as Ghatam, the chief of the Muʿtazilah, as saying, "Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** in the incident of seeking allegiance pressed the door strongly against Fatimah's side which resulted in the miscarriage of the child that was in her womb. He also ordered to burn the house upon those who were inside, while there was none except Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn (ʿa) inside the house."

*Position of Lady Fatimah**Error! Bookmark not defined.*

Abu'l-ʿAs, husband of Zaynab the Holy Prophet's daughter, was taken as a prisoner of war by Muslims in a battle, but later on was freed like others. He promised the Holy Prophet (s) to arrange means of Zaynab's return to Medina. The Holy Prophet (s) assigned Zayd ibn Harithah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** with a group of the Helpers to stop at eight

miles away from Mecca and whenever her camel-litter arrived, bring her to Medina. The people of Quraysh became aware of the Prophet's daughter's escape from Mecca and a group of them decided to stop her return from midway. Jabr ibn al-Aswad, accompanied by a group, reached Zaynab's camel-litter and struck his lance upon it. Because of this stroke, Zaynab had a miscarriage and returned to Mecca. Having heard this news, the Holy Prophet (s) was very upset. After the conquest of Mecca, he allowed the spilling of his blood as permissible.

Ibn Abi'l-Hadid**Error! Bookmark not defined.** says, "I read this incident with my teacher, Abu-Ja'far, who commented: The Prophet (s) allowed the blood of one who scared his daughter Zaynab and caused the miscarriage of her child to be shed. Had he been alive, he would certainly have allowed the shedding of the blood of that person who scared his daughter Fatimah and resulted in the miscarriage of her son, Muhsin."

Government over the people

Those who justify the selection of the caliphs in the form of *government of the people over the people*, or on the basis of *consultation*, belong to one of these two groups:

1. The group that emphasizes the importance of Islamic principles, adopts it with the knowledge of today's world politics, and desires to attract the attentions of Westerners by implying that a government of the people over the people is not the result of modern thinking, but Islam had already presented such a perfect model fourteen centuries ago. After the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s), his companions executed this model by appointing his caliph. This group, although their intentions are pure, do not want to consult the specialists, but simply rest their case upon a series of narrations and misleading appearances.

2. A group that is prejudiced against Shiah Muslims and spirituality and due to mysterious propagation has shown its inclination towards Sunnis. It has targeted the simple-minded young believers to weaken their thinking with respect to the basic principles of Shiah belief.

The mistakes of the former group are pardonable. Through submittal of correct and authentic documents, they can still be remedied. Speaking against them is undesirable, and best service towards them is to remain in touch and never cut off any intellectual and educational relationships with them. Reform of the latter group is quite difficult, because they do not have the correct and sufficient information about the religion. Serious efforts

should be made to prevent simple-minded and less learned youths to become their prey and in case they have become victims, the doubts and misunderstandings created should be removed from their hearts as soon as possible.

Does democracy mean that the head of a ruling party should assign some people to forcefully take allegiance from people who are either neutral or in opposition, or wage a war against them until their surrender or execution? History has witnessed that among all the members of the ruling party, it was only Umar who insisted on pushing others for allegiance and went to the extent of even waging war. Al-Zubayr was among the refugees in the house of Lady Fatimah (ʿa) and his relationship with the family of the Prophet (s) had not turned turbid as yet.

When the pressure of the attackers reached a climax, al-Zubayr with his naked sword came out and said, "I will never pay homage. Moreover, all of you should pay homage to Ali." He was a famous valiant hero of Islam, a courageous and skilled swordsman. The attackers sensed a danger and jointly attacking him, succeeded in taking the sword from his hand and preventing great bloodshed.

What was Umar's reason for all that insistence? Were his intentions sincere, or some kind of secret deal behind the scene had already been made between him and Abu-Bakr? Imam Ali (ʿa), under intense pressure and being threatened with death, looked at Umar and said, "Do continue milking, because fifty percent of it belongs to you, and tie down the caliphate for Abu-Bakr today so that it could be returned to you tomorrow."**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

If seeking allegiance for Abu-Bakr was really based on the principle of democracy and was a model of instructions of the Holy Quran: "*Decide your affairs through mutual consultation* [42:38]*,"* then, why did he in the last moments of his life, wish that he had not committed the following three acts: "1. I wish I had respected the reverence of Fatimah's house and not ordered to attack, even if its gates were closed upon my assigned people, 2. I wish on that day of Saqifah, I had not assumed the burden of caliphate and left it for Umar and Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah and accepted the position of vizier, and 3. I wish I had not burnt Iyas ibn Abdullah alive in the trench of burning fire."

It is so terribly unfortunate that the famous Egyptian poet, Hafiz Ibrahim, has praised Umar for his shameful conduct towards Lady Fatimah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**:

*I remind you of Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s words, when he told Ali:*
"If you refuse allegiance, I will burn your house and not permit you to stay here."
While he uttered these words, the daughter of Muhammad was inside the house.
No one but Umar could dare to utter these words in front of the knight and supporter of the Adnan tribe.

This wretched poet considers the criminal act of Umar as praiseworthy! Is it praiseworthy to declare that the honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** does not possess any respect in the eyes of Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who was ready to burn down the house of Holy Prophet's daughter for the sake of a few more votes for Abu-Bakr? And it is so laughable that the author of *al-'Iqd al-Farid* (4/260) has narrated that when Ali ('a) was forcefully brought to the mosque, the caliph asked him, "Do you not like my leadership?" Imam Ali ('a) replied, "No, it is not like that. I have just committed to myself that after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s), I will not put my cloak upon my shoulder until I have completed collecting the entire Holy Quran." This is why he remained behind the others, and then he made allegiance.

However, he himself and others have narrated from A'ishah that for six months, until Lady Fatimah ('a)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was alive, Imam Ali ('a) did not offer allegiance to Abu-Bakr and it was only after her passing away that he gave his hand to the caliph for allegiance.

Imam Ali ('a)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was not the only one who did not offer allegiance to Abu-Bakr; rather, **Error! Bookmark not defined.**a group that was identified earlier while discussing the events of Saqifah did not either. Salman,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** the greatest supporter of Imam Ali's vicegerencey, said about Abu-Bakr's caliphate, "You accepted the caliphate of someone who was only older in age among you while ignored the Holy Prophet's Household ('a)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. If you had not moved the caliphate away from its assigned axis, differences and divisions would never have appeared and all of us could have enjoyed the sweet fruits of the caliphate of truth."

IMAM ALI AND FADAK

Economic worth of Fadak

The complexities at Saqifah ended and Abu-Bakr took control of caliphate. Imam Ali (ʿa) with his loyal supporters left the scene of government, after announcing the truth and making the community fully aware of his usurped rights. For the sake of solidarity, they decided not to oppose them, and by educating, commenting on the exalted themes of the Holy Quran, issuing correct judicial judgments, engaging in debate, and answering profound enquiries by the Jews and Christians, continued their individual and social services.

Imam Ali (ʿa) possessed such outstanding virtues and distinctions that it was not possible for his opponents to take away from him. It was possible that in the near future he would create trouble for the caliph, because he had the financial means to do so from the property of Fadak. The caliph saw it as expedient to take this power away from Imam Ali (ʿa), because this could be taken away.

Description of Fadak

The fertile land of Fadak located in the vicinity of Khaybar, about 140 km away from Medina, which was a strategic area for the Jews. The Holy Prophet (s), after conquering the Jewish fortresses of Khaybar, Wadi al-Qura and Tayma', filled the north of Medina with the Muslim military forces. The power of the Jews in this land was considered potential threat and possible ground for dangerous plots and movements against Islam and Muslims. The Prophet (s) dispatched an ambassador to meet the chiefs of Fadak to diffuse this threat. Joshua ibn Noon, who was the chief of Fadak, preferred surrender and peace over fighting, its residents committed paying half of its yearly earnings to the Prophet (s) and decided to live under the banner of Islam without committing any treason against the Muslims.

The government of Islam too, in reciprocation, assumed the security of their region. In Islam, areas that are possessed through victory in warfare belong to all Muslims and are managed by government officials. But the lands obtained by Muslims without any military engagement and warfare belonged solely to the person of the Holy Prophet (s),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and were to be utilized according to instructions determined by Islamic laws for specific provisions. One of the important provisions was

that the Prophet (s) and his successor, the Imam, should be able to provide for the needs of their families and nearest relatives in a respectable manner.

Fadak; a gift of the Holy Prophet to Lady Fatimah

Shiite exegetes of the Holy Quran and narrators, as well as a group of Sunni scholars, have written that when this Quranic verse was revealed, "*Give the kinsman his due, the needy, the wayfarer, and squander not (thy wealth) in wantonness,* [17/26]" The Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** called for Fatimah (ʿa) and gave the land of Fadak to her. The narrator of this matter is Abu-Saʿid al-Khudri, one of the Holy Prophet's great companions.

All Shiite and Sunni exegetes accept that this verse was revealed for his family and nearest relatives and that his daughter was the best manifestation of nearest relatives *(dhu'l-qurba)*. Even when a Syrian man asked Imam Ali Ibn al-Husayn (ʿa) to introduce himself, he recited the above verse, and this matter was so clear among Muslims that the Syrian man nodded testifying, and said to him, "Because of your being the nearest and having a relationship with the Prophet, God ordered His Prophet to give you your right." The fact that this Quranic verse was revealed for the right of Lady Fatimah (ʿa) and her children is accepted by all Muslims, but whether the Holy Prophet (s) did or did not bestow Fadak to his honorable daughter is controversial among some Sunni intellectuals.

Why did the Holy Prophet give Fadak to his daughter?

We all know from the life of the Holy Prophet (s) and his family that they never had any attachment with the world or worldly wealth. Nevertheless, we see the Holy Prophet (s) bestowing Fadak to his daughter and specially assigning it to Imam Ali's family. Why did he do that? Here are some reasons for his action:

1. The leadership of Muslims after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** according to his clearly repeated words belonged to Imam Ali (ʿa).**Error! Bookmark not defined.** This position incurred heavy expenditure. Imam Ali (ʿa) would have used Fadak's income in an efficient manner as caliph. But the caliph was already well-informed about this foresightedness of the Holy Prophet (s) and so, immediately removed Fadak from the hands of the Prophet's family.

2. The family of the Holy Prophet (s) consisted of his daughter Lady Fatimah (ʿa), his son-in-law Ali (ʿa), and his two grandchildren, Imam al-

Hasan (ʿa) and Imam al-Husayn (ʿa). To ensure that the prestige of the Prophet (s) and his family remains intact and they will live a respectable life, the Holy Prophet (s) gave Fadak to his daughter.

3. The Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** knew that a group had a severe grudge against Imam Ali (ʿa) because a majority of their relatives were killed by his sword in battles. One means to decrease this enmity was that Imam Ali (ʿa) could provide some consolation to them by providing them some financial help and gradually win over their sentiments and sympathies. Likewise, he should be able to help all the deprived and poor people and the sentimental obstructions that existed in the path of his caliphate could be removed. Although the Holy Prophet (s) apparently bestowed Fadak to Lady Fatimah (ʿa), its income was at the disposal of the holder of the vicegerency so that, in addition to meeting his own personal family needs, he could utilize it in the interest of Islam and Muslims.

Income of Fadak

Reviewing history will strengthen all the three factors, because Fadak was a fertile land that could have helped him in the pursuits of his cherished goals. Al-Halabi, the famous historian, writes: "Abu-Bakr was inclined that Fadak should remain in the hand of the Prophet's daughter and confirmed her ownership upon a piece of paper; but Umar intervened in giving the paper to Fatimah, and looking at Abu-Bakr, said, 'Tomorrow, you may have a severe need for Fadak's income, if the Arab polytheists rebelled against Muslims. From where will you provide the expenses for the war?'"

From this sentence, it is clear that the income from Fadak was equivalent to the amount needed to meet at least a part of the expenses of military warfare against the enemy. From this consideration, it was prudent to the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to place this financial aid at the disposal of Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid**Error! Bookmark not defined.** has written, "I told one of the intellectuals of the School of Imamiyyah Shiah about Fadak, 'The village of Fadak does not have a huge area. A tiny peace of land not having more than few plants was not so important that the opponents of Fatimah would show their greediness for it.' He replied, 'You are mistaken in your belief. The number of plants over there were not less than the number of plants in Kufa at present. Preventing the Prophet's family from the income of this fertile land was to prevent Imam Ali (a) from utilizing that income to rise up against the caliph. They deprived not only Fatimah of Fadak but

they also deprived all the members of the Banu-Hashim clan as well as and the children of Abd al-Muttalib of their genuine right to having one fifth of the spoils of war (*khums*).'"

The people busy in earning their means of living can never think of rebelling against the prevailing situation.

Imam Musa Ibn Jaʿfar (ʿa) has defined the boundaries of Fadak as follows: "The boundaries of Fadak were Aden from one side, Samarqand from the second side, Africa from the third side and oceans, islands and Armenia from the fourth side."**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Fadak was only a part of Khaybar and it did not consist of such boundaries. The objective of Imam al-Kazim (ʿa) was to announce that not only was the land of Fadak usurped from them but the government over all the Islamic countries whose four boundaries were mentioned by him was taken away from the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa).

Qutb al-Din al-Rawandi has written, "The Holy Prophet (s) received an amount of twenty four thousand Dinars, or seventy thousands Dinars as rent for the property of Fadak. When Muʿawiyah took over the government, he divided Fadak between three individuals: One third to Marwan ibn al-Hakm, one third to Amr ibn Uthman and the last one third to his own son Yazid. And when Marwan become the ruler, he took all of it for himself."

This manner of distribution indicates that Fadak was significantly large for Muʿawiyah to divide it among three important and rich people. When Lady Fatimah (ʿa) spoke to Abu-Bakr and took her witnesses along with her to prove her claim, he said in reply, "Fadak was not the personal property of the person of the Prophet; rather, it was the property of Muslims. From its income, he mobilized soldiers to dispatch them to fight with enemies as well as distributed it in the way of God." —

Since the Holy Prophet (s) utilized Fadak's income for mobilizing the army or distributed it among the Banu-Hashim and other deprived people, it proves that this portion of Khaybar provided a huge income that was sufficient to meet expenses required for the mobilization of the army. When Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** decided to clean the Arabian peninsula of Jews, he warned them to surrender their lands to the Islamic government and accept their compensation and also evacuate Fadak. The Holy Prophet (s) decided with the Jewish residents of Khaybar to keep half of the income and pay the remaining half to him. Therefore, Umar dispatched Ibn al-Tayyihan, Farwah, Habbab, and Zayd ibn Thabit to

Fadak in order to appraise the price of the usurped land and pay it to the local residents of that area. They paid fifty thousand Dirhams as the share of the Jews, and Umar paid this amount from the wealth that he had got from Iraq.

Motivations behind the confiscation of Fadak

After installing Abu-Bakr as caliph, Umar made sure that the Khazraj, the most powerful tribe among the Helpers, left the scene of resistance; the Banu-Hashim, headed by Imam Ali (ʿa), renounced an armed uprising or forming an opposition against the ruling party. But his relative victory in Medina was not sufficient; therefore, support of Mecca was required. The Umayyads,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** headed by Abu-Sufyan,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** formed a powerful group, refused to accept Abu-Bakr officially and waited to learn about Abu-Sufyan's verdict.

When news of the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s) reached Mecca, the governor of Mecca, a young man of twenty four years, named Attab ibn Usayd ibn al-ʿAs,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** informed the people about the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s), but did not mention his successor, while both events occurred simultaneously. Obviously, both of them were reported together but the ominous silence of the Umayyad governor of Mecca had no other reason but to learn about the opinion of the chief of his own family, Abu-Sufyan,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and then act according to his instructions.

Because of these realities, Abu-Bakr knew that the continuation of his leadership with strong opposite groups was going to be very difficult. One of the most influential people who should have been approached was Abu-Sufyan**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. He was one of the staunch opponents of Abu-Bakr's government. Declaring his discontent, he said, "What do I have to do with *Abu-Fasil*?" Also, after entering Medina, he went straight to the homes of Ali (ʿa) and al-Abbas and invited them to an armed uprising: "I will fill Medina with mounted and foot soldiers. Rise and take the affairs of leadership in your own hands!"

Abu-Bakr left the wealth which Abu-Sufyan had brought with him from Mecca and did not even take a single Dinar from it to appease him and purchase his support. He offered the governorship of Syria to his son Yazid, Muʿawiyah's brother. When the news reached Abu-Sufyan that his son had been offered a share in the government, he immediately said, "Abu-Bakr has shown respect to kinship bonds!" Earlier, Abu-Sufyan did not mention

any sort of kinship bonds between Abu-Bakr and him.

The number of the people like Abu-Sufyan whose support could be purchased is more than that can be described in these pages. Everybody knows that the allegiance with Abu-Bakr in Saqifah took place without the presence of the group of Emigrants. Among the Emigrants only three persons—namely, Abu-Bakr, Umar and Abu-Ubaydah—were present. This manner of taking allegiance and placing the Emigrants against an already committed act naturally resulted in raising the wrath of the group. It was therefore necessary for Abu-Bakr to eliminate their grievances and pay attention to their means of living.

In order to accomplish these goals, he not only took action to purchase the support of the Helpers, but also distributed wealth among their women. When Zayd ibn Thabit brought the share of the woman of the Banu-ʿAdi Tribe to his home, his honorable wife asked, "What is this?" Zayd replied, "This is the share that the *caliph* has distributed among the women including you." That lady with this special charity realized that this money was nothing but bribery! She replied to him, "Are you paying me this to purchase my religion? By God I will not accept any thing out of it," and returned it.

Budget deficit of the government

The Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** distributed whatever he possessed during his illness, all of it, with the result that the public treasury was empty. The Prophet's representatives, after his passing away, entered Medina with limited amounts of money or sent it through trusted individuals. But this limited revenue was certainly not sufficient for a squandering government, busy buying the support of its opponents. On the other hand, the surrounding tribes raised the banner of opposition and refused to pay the religious tax to the caliph's representatives, inflicting a severe shattering economic blow to the ruler.

The head of the ruling party thought of no better option than seizing properties to meet the needs of the government. Among them, there was nothing better than Fadak. By quoting a tradition from the Prophet (s) that only he himself had heard, he usurped it from Lady Fatimah's hand and utilized its enormous wealth to fortify the pillars of his government.

Error! Bookmark not defined. The words and actions of Abu-Bakr and his supporters also testified to this act. When Lady Fatimah (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** demanded Fadak from him, he replied, "The

Prophet provided your living expenses from its income and distributed the remaining income among the Muslims. What will you do with its income?"

The honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** replied, "I too will follow his practice and distribute the remaining income among the Muslims." Although Lady Fatimah ('a) created a dead end for Abu-Bakr, he replied, "I am going to do the same thing that your father used to do!"

If Abu-Bakr's aim was only to put into practice a Divine command that the income of Fadak, after deducting the living expenses of the family of the Holy Prophet (s),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** should be distributed among the Muslims, then what difference would it have made if this task was done by him or by the honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet (s) and her respectable husband? Insisting that the income of Fadak should remain in his own hands explicitly proves that he had got his eyes on its income so that he could utilize it to fortify his own government.

Other Factors behind the confiscation of Fadak

Another crucial factor was the fear of Ali's financial power. He possessed all the conditions for leadership and if he wanted to compete with the shaky caliphate, this power would be add to the serious threat. Therefore, in order to weaken the family and position of Imam Ali ('a), Abu-Bakr seized Fadak from its real owner and deprived the family of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** of this income so that they would run their financial affairs through the government's donations. This reality is explicitly clear from what Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** said to Abu-Bakr, "People are slaves of the world and they do not have any other aim except it. If you take away the one-fifth share (*khums*) of the spoils of war from Ali as well as Fadak, the people will naturally incline to you when they see him empty-handed."**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Abu-Bakr did not only deprive the family of the Holy Prophet (s) of Fadak but he also deprived them of the one-fifth income from the spoils of war, which with a clear command of the Holy Quran, belonged to the near relatives of the Prophet (s). After the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s), not a single Dinar from this income was paid to them. Historians imagine that the dispute between Lady Fatimah ('a) and Abu-Bakr was only limited to Fadak, while she disputed with him regarding three issues: 1. Fadak that was given by the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to her, 2. the inheritance that was left by the Holy Prophet (s)**Error!**

Bookmark not defined. for her, and 3. the share of the near relatives; i.e. the one-fifth share of the income from the spoils of war.

Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** said, "When Lady Fatimah (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** asked Abu-Bakr about Fadak and the share of the near relatives, he refused to give it to her."

Anas ibn Malik has narrated: Lady Fatimah (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** came to Abu-Bakr and recited the verse of *Khums* in which there was a share for the near relatives of the Prophet (s). He replied, "The Quran recited by you is the same Quran that is also recited by me. I will never give you the share of near relatives, but I am ready to provide you with your living expenses from it and the remaining income will be utilized to fulfill the needs of other Muslims." Lady Fatimah replied, "This is in violation of the command of God. When the verse of *Khums* was revealed, the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** said, 'Greetings be upon the family of Muhammad, for God Almighty, through His benevolence and generosity, has made them needless.'" Abu-Bakr replied, "Let me consult with Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Abu-Ubaydah; if they agree with your demand, I am ready to pay you the entire share of the near relatives!" When they were consulted, both of them agreed with Abu-Bakr, but Lady Fatimah was astonished with their response and realized that all of them had planned a conspiracy against her.

Abu-Bakr was not supposed to use his jurisprudence against the clear command of the Holy Quran; rather, he, using the excuse that he had not heard any thing from the Prophet (s) regarding this matter, commented about the context of the verse and said, "The family of Muhammad should be paid in accordance with their living expenses and the rest should be used for the expediency of Islam." These efforts were not undertaken for any other reason than to empty the Imam's hand of worldly wealth and make him dependent on the government, financially unable to rise against it.

From the point of view of Shiite jurisprudence, on the testimony of the traditions that have reached us through the successors of the Holy Prophet (s), the share of near relatives is not personal property of the Prophet's near relatives. The Holy Quran had announced such a share for the near relatives because the holder of this title after the Holy Prophet (s) also possessed the position of religious leadership; that is, Imamate; therefore, the share of God, the share of the Prophet (s), and the share of the near relatives were to be given to the near relative of the Holy Prophet (s) who

was the guardian and leader and were to be spent under his supervision.

Abu-Bakr knew that Lady Fatimah (ʿa) was not asking for her personal share, but she was demanding the share for the person who was the holder of the title of near relative and, as a leader of Muslims, should be able to spend it to fulfill their needs; and such a person after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s) was none except Imam Ali (ʿa). Allowing such a share to Imam Ali (ʿa) would have been equivalent to retreating from caliphate and accepting the leadership and Imam Ali's succession to the Holy Prophet. For this reason, Abu-Bakr looked at Lady Fatimah (ʿa) and said, "I will never hand over to you the share of near relatives; but after meeting your personal living expenses, I will spend the remaining in the path of Islam!"

Fadak under the conflicting political ambitions

After the expansion of the Islamic government, great Muslim victories resulted in flooding the caliphate with plenty of wealth and the caliphate found itself needless of Fadak's income. On the other hand, with the passage of time, pillars of caliphate were fortified and nobody imagined that the righteous caliph, Imam Ali (ʿa), even after having Fadak's income would create an opposite front against them. However, the land of Fadak and its income was still considered the political dominion and estate of every caliph who took over power and decided about its distribution in accordance with his own point of view and inclination towards the family of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

Those who had completely cut off their bonds with the family of the Prophet (s) strictly prevented the return of Fadak to its real owners and considered it as public and government property. They either took it under their own control or gave it to one of their close friends or near relatives. But those who had more or less compassion with the family of the Holy Prophet (s) or, according to the expediencies and politics of the time, believed that it was essential to show consolation towards the children of Lady Fatimah (ʿa), handed it over to them until the day when another one became the successor to the earlier caliph with different politics. Thus, Fadak never had a steady status and it was always governed according to conflicting politics. Sometimes, it was returned to its real owners, while most of the times it was seized and remained a sensitive and painful issue of Islam.

During the first three caliphs' rule, Fadak's status remained the same. From its income, a small amount was paid to the family of the Holy

Prophet (s) as living expenses and its remaining income was spent under the supervision of the ruler. When Muʿawiyah took over control of leadership, he divided it between three persons: a share for Marwan, a share for Amr ibn Uthman, and a share for his own son Yazid. Fadak continued to be exchanged from hand to hand until Marwan ibn al-Hakam, during his reign, bought the shares from those two persons and took its control and ultimately bestowed it upon his own son Abd al-Aziz who gifted it or left it as an inheritance for his own son Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz.

When Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Abd al-Aziz came to power, he decided to cleanse the Muslim society of the shameful actions of the Umayyads**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. He was inclined towards the family of the Holy Prophet (s);**Error! Bookmark not defined.** therefore, in order to compensate for all the injustice committed by his forefathers against them, he returned Fadak to its actual owners. He returned it to al-Hasan ibn al-Hasan ibn Ali**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who gave it to Imam al-Sajjad (ʿa).**Error! Bookmark not defined.** He wrote a letter to the governor of Medina Abu-Bakr ibn Amr and ordered him to return Fadak to the children of Lady Fatimah (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. The excuse-seeking governor of Medina replied, “Fatimah has many children in Medina and each one of them lives in his own house. To whom should I return the Fadak?” On receiving this reply from his governor, Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz became extremely angry and said, “If I order you to kill a cow, will you ask me about its color like the Children of Israel did? When this letter reaches you, distribute Fadak among Lady Fatimah’s children who are from Ali.”

People close to the caliphate from the branches of the Umayyads were very unhappy with the justice of the caliph; they thus said, “With this act, you have insulted the first two caliphs.” It was not too long that Umar ibn Qays with a group from Kufa entered Damascus and criticized the caliph’s action, but he replied, “You are ignorant and foolish. Whatever I have remembered you too have heard, but forgotten it. My teacher Abu-Bakr ibn Amr ibn Hizam narrated to me from his father who narrated his grandfather to have quoted the Holy Prophet (s) as saying, ‘Fatimah is part of my body; her wrath is my wrath and her happiness is my happiness.’ Fadak, during the period of the caliphs, was a public and private property, which was later on handed over to Marwan who bestowed it upon my father Abd al-Aziz. After the demise of my father, I and my brother inherited it as an inheritance and my brother has sold or gifted his share to me, and I, too, in accordance with the narration of the Holy Prophet (s),

have distributed it among the children of Lady Fatimah."

After the demise of Abd al-Aziz, the descendants of Marwan, one after another, took over the control of caliphate and all of them took an opposite path from the path selected by Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz, and during the period of the caliphate of Marwan's children, Fadak was under their control, and the family of the Holy Prophet (s) were completely deprived of its income. After the end of the government of the Umayyads and the establishment of the Abbasid government, Fadak continued to change hands. The first Abbasid ruler, Abu'l-Abbas al-Saffah, returned Fadak to Abdullah ibn al-Hasan, and after that, the second Abbasid ruler seized it from him. His son al-Mahdi did not follow his father's way; he returned Fadak to the children of Lady Fatimah (ʿa). His children Musa and Harun, who took over the caliphate one after another respectively, seized it from the family of the Holy Prophet (s) and took it under their own control until al-Ma'mun, the son of Harun, took over the caliphate in his own hands. One day, al-Ma'mun officially sat on his throne to review the letters of grievances and complaints written by the oppressed people. The first letter which reached his hand the same day it was written was a letter sent by an attorney and representative of Lady Fatimah (ʿa), in which he had requested the return of Fadak to the Prophet's descendents. Having read the content of the letter, tears filled his eyes and he ordered the writer of the letter to be summoned.

After a while, an old man entered the caliph's assembly and sat down in front of him to debate about Fadak. After a series of discussions, al-Ma'mun was finally convinced and he agreed to write an official letter to the governor of Medina to return Fadak to the descendents of Lady Fatimah (ʿa). The return of Fadak gave relief to the Shiah; so, Diʿbil al-Khzaʿi,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** a famous poet, composed some poetic verses on this occasion, saying, "Time smiled when al-Ma'mun returned Fadak to the children of Hashim who were its real owners."**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

The astonishing letter written by al-Ma'mun in the year 210 A.H. to the governor of Medina is presented hereinafter in brief:

"The *commander of the faithful* possesses a special position in God's religion and caliphate. Due to his close kinship with the Prophet's family, he deserves to pay respect to the Prophet's traditions, and whatever he has given to others should be implemented accordingly. Since the honorable Prophet (s) bestowed Fadak to his daughter Fatimah and this issue is so

clear that the children of Prophet (s) do not have any disagreement about it and no one higher than them has claims against them, it requires no further investigation. On this basis, the *commander of the faithful* al-Ma'mun regards it expedient that in order to seek God's pleasure and administer justice, he return it to the descendents of the Prophet (s) in confirmation of his orders. I hereby order the government officials and writers to officially register it in the relevant government offices. After the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s), whoever claimed any charity or promise from the Prophet (s) during the Hajj ceremonies, Muslims accepted his claim without any proof; so what can be said about his honorable daughter except that her words should be accepted and confirmed? The *commander of the faithful* has therefore ordered Mubarak al-Tabari to give Fadak with all its boundaries and rights intact to the inheritors of Fatimah, and whatever slaves and grains belong to the village of Fadak should be handed over to Muhammad ibn Yahya ibn al-Hasan ibn Zayd ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn and Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn. Let it be known that this is the judgment that has been inspired by God to the *commander of the faithful* and God Almighty has blessed him to seek the nearness of God and his Prophet (s) through this means. Let those who are assigned by you know that they should make their best endeavor to develop Fadak and increase its income."(1)

Fadak was in the hands of the descendents of Lady Fatimah (ʿa) when al-Mutawakkil, the Abbasid ruler, was selected for caliphate. He was one of the staunchest enemies of the Prophet's family and therefore he seized Fadak from the descendents of Lady Fatimah (ʿa) and appointed Abdullah ibn Umar as its administrator. In the land of Fadak, there were eleven date-palm trees planted by the blessed hands of the Holy Prophet (s), and during the Hajj ceremonies, people bought its dates at an expensive price as a sacred gift, which was a significant economical help to the Prophet's family. Abdullah lost his temper and he was very upset about this matter; so, he dispatched a person to Medina to cut off those date palms trees. He, too, with extreme hard-heartedness discharged his assignment immediately but when he returned to Basra, he became crippled. From that period onward, Fadak was seized from the Prophet's family and tyrannical governments rejected the claims of return filed by the inheritors of Lady Fatimah (ʿa).

(1) Al-Buladhari, *Futuh al-Buldan*, pages 39-41; *Tarikh al-Yaʿqubi* 3/48.

FILE OF FADAK FOR PUBLIC EXPOSURE

Fourteen centuries have already passed from the usurpation of Fadak and the complaint of the honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet (s). Most people would think that a correct judgment about this incident is difficult. Time creates hurdles for a judge to access the details of the file to enable him to read all the lines of its content in detail and issue a just verdict. But what can make the prosecutor's task easier is to refer to the Holy Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet (s) and create a new file on its basis and the absolute unchangeable principles of Islam, and, considering the claims of opponents, issue his own judgment. Here is the basis of this matter:

One of the absolute principles of Islam is that every land that is conquered by Muslims without war and military confrontation belongs to the Islamic government and is regarded as public domain. Its assets are at the disposal of the Holy Prophet (s). This type of property is not the personal property of the Holy Prophet (s) but it belongs to the Islamic government that is headed by the Holy Prophet (s) and, after him, would be at the disposal of whoever takes over leadership affairs and position. The Holy Quran describes these basic Islamic principles as follows: "*And that which God gave as spoils unto His messenger and ye urged not any horse or riding-camel for its sake, but God giveth His messenger lordship over whom He will. God is able to do all things. That which God giveth as spoils unto His messenger from the people of townships, it is for God, His messenger, for the near of kin, the orphans, the needy and the wayfarer.* [59:6-7]"

The properties that were at the disposal of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** consisted of two types:

Private Property: The properties that were owned by the Holy Prophet (s) personally have been mentioned in detail in the books of history and traditions as his personal properties. The disposal of such property, during the life of the Holy Prophet (s), was at his discretion, and after his demise, in accordance with the Islamic laws of inheritance, would naturally be transferred to his inheritor. However, it was seen that the inheritor of the Prophet (s) had been deprived of his personal assets, which would then be distributed among the deserving people or utilized for Islamic interests. A comprehensive discussion will be presented to prove that in the laws of inheritance there is absolutely no difference between inheritors of the Holy Prophet (s) and other inheritors, and the tradition according to which the

first caliph deprived the Prophet's inheritor of inheritance, assuming its being correct, had other reasons that made him act neglectfully towards it.

Public Property: The Islamic government and the Holy Prophet (s), as the guardian of Muslims, had the right to dispose the wealth and properties that belonged to them and spend it in the interest of Islam and Muslims. These were called public domain assets. The Arabic word *fay'* means *return,* and it is meant for the lands that are taken by the Islamic government without war and bloodshed and whose residents, under certain conditions, agreed to live under the security of the Islamic government.

This type of property which was taken by the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** without any painstaking encounter of the Islamic army belonged to the Islamic government and soldiers and Muslims did not have any right upon it. The Holy Prophet (s) spent its income on Islamic interests and occasionally distributed it among the deserving impoverished people for them to utilize it and with their own ingenuity and endeavors earn their living expenses. The earning of the Holy Prophet (s) consisted mostly from the income of these properties and occasionally, from the one-fifth *(khums)* of the spoils of war. Here it would be appropriate to present an example of the distribution of such properties by the Holy Prophet (s).

The Banu'l-Nazir consisted of three Jewish tribes who possessed homes, gardens and agricultural lands in the vicinity of Medina. When the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** migrated to Medina, the tribes of al-Aws and al-Khazraj**Error! Bookmark not defined.** believed in Islam but the other three tribes remained upon their own religion. The Holy Prophet (s), through his painstaking endeavors, tried to sign special treaties to ensure solidarity and unity between the residents of Medina and the tribes living in its surrounding areas. Ultimately, three tribes signed a peace treaty with the Holy Prophet (s) that they would renounce all sorts of treason against the Muslims and would never take steps against Muslim interest.

But all three tribes openly and secretly committed treason against the signed peace treaty by planning the fall of the Islamic government, including the murder of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. When the Holy Prophet (s) went to the area of the Banu'l-Nazir, they plotted to kill him through an act of terror. The Holy Prophet (s) therefore forced them to quit Medina and distributed their homes and agricultural lands among the Emigrants and some impoverished people

among the Helpers.

In Islamic history, the people who benefited from this property and became home owners have been mentioned as Ali (ʿa), Abu-Bakr, Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf, and Bilal, from the Emigrants; and Abu-Dujanah, Sahl ibn Hunayf, and al-Harith from the Helpers.

Fadak; a public domain property

Historians and narrators have unanimously accepted that Fadak belonged to the public domain assets. Fadak was not conquered through military warfare; rather, when news of the defeat of Khaybar reached the village of Fadak, its residents unanimously decided for a peace treaty with the Holy Prophet (s), providing him one half of the property of Fadak that they would be completely free in performing their religious ceremonies and in reciprocation and the Islamic government would provide security for that region. No Muslim scholar has any difference of opinion about this issue, and from the discussion of the honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet, it can be concluded with certainty that both opponents had accepted Fadak as a public domain property and their difference was about something else.

*The Holy Prophet had already given Fadak to Lady Fatimah*Error! Bookmark not defined.

Shiite scholars and a group of Sunni narrators unanimously agree that after the revelation of this Quranic verse: *"It is for God and His messenger, near of kin, the orphans, the needy and the wayfarer,"* the Holy Prophet (s) bestowed Fadak to his daughter. The documentation of this tradition ultimately begins with the great companions Abu-Saʿid al-Khudri and Ibn Abbas, and among Sunni narrators, the following individuals have narrated this tradition:

1. Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, died in AH 909, writes in his famous book on Quranic exegesis, "When the above verse was revealed, the Prophet called Fatimah and gave her Fadak." He adds, "This tradition has been narrated by master narrators like al-Bazzaz, Abu-Yaʿla, Ibn Abi-Hatam and Ibn Mardawayh whom quoted it from Abu-Saʿid al-Khudri."

He further adds, "Ibn Mardawayh has narrated from Ibn Abbas that when the above verse was revealed, the Prophet gave Fadak to Fatimah."

2. Ala' al-Din Ali ibn Husam, famous as al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, resident of Mecca, died in AH 976, has also narrated the abovementioned tradition. He wrote, "Narrators like Ibn al-Najjar and al-Hakim have narrated this

tradition in their own book of history, quoting it from Abu-Saʿid."

3. Abu-Ishaq Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ibrahim al-Nayshaburi, famous as al-Thaʿlabi, died in AH 427 or 437, has narrated it in his book of Quranic exegesis: *Al-Kashf wa'l-Bayan*.

4. Al-Buladhari, died in AH 279, has narrated the content of al-Ma'mun's letter to the governor of Medina. In this letter, it has been mentioned: "God's Messenger bestowed Fadak to Fatimah and this fact is absolutely certain that the descendents of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** have never contradicted it and she (Fatimah) continued to claim Fadak's ownership until her death."

5. Ahmad ibn Abd al-Aziz al-Jawhari in his book *al-Saqifah* has written: "When Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz took over the control of leadership affairs, the first property that was returned to its real owner was Fadak to al-Hasan ibn al-Hasan ibn Ali**Error! Bookmark not defined.**." It could be interpreted from this sentence that Fadak was the absolute property of the Holy Prophet's honorable daughter**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

6. Although Ibn Abi'l-Hadid**Error! Bookmark not defined.** has quoted the revelation of the verse about Fadak from Abu-Saʿid Khudri, he has based his writings on the quotation from Sharif al-Murtada's *al-Shafi*. If the words of Sharif al-Murtada were not correct in his view, he would have certainly criticized them. In addition, in the chapter of research on this issue**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, his discussion with his teacher of Western School of Baghdad clearly shows that he believed that the Holy Prophet (s) had given Fadak to his honorable daughter.

7. Al-Halabi, in his own tradition, has mentioned the claim of the Prophet's daughter and the names of her witnesses, saying "The caliph of the time signed the document of Fadak in the name of Fatimah (ʿa), but Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** tore it apart.

8. Al-Masʿudi has written in *Muruj al-Dhahab*, "The daughter of the Prophet (s) discussed the issue of Fadak with Abu-Bakr, asked him for its return, and brought Ali, al-Hasan, al-Husayn, and Ummu-Ayman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** as her witnesses."

9. Yaqut al-Hamawi has written, "Fatimah went before Abu-Bakr and told him that the Prophet (s) had given Fadak to her, but he asked for witnesses... During the reign of Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz, Fadak was returned to the Prophet's descendents because the income of Muslims was enough."

Al-Samhudi, in *Wafa' al-Wafa,* describes the discussion of Lady Fatimah (ʿa) with Abu-Bakr and writes, "Ali and Ummu-Ayman testified in Fatimah's favor and both of them testified that during the life of the Prophet (s), he had given Fadak to Fatimah. He has further added, "Fadak, in the caliphate of Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz was returned to the descendants of Lady Fatimah."

Among Shiite scholars, al-Kulayni, al-Ayyashi, and Shaykh al-Saduq have quoted the revelation of this verse about the Holy Prophet's kinship and have added that after the revelation of this verse, he gave Fadak to his daughter Lady Fatimah (ʿa). In this regard, the most eminent Shiite researcher, Sayyid Hashim al-Bahrani has narrated eleven authentic traditions from Imam Ali, Imam al-Sajjad, Imam al-Sadiq, Imam al-Kazim and Imam al-Rida confirming this fact.

In this file, the claimer is the honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet (s) whose piety and infallibility is explicitly clear for every one. The occupier is the chief of the ruling party and the ruler of the time who has taken control of the leadership after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s); a scared group and a greedy group surrounding him. It was not more than ten days after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s) that Lady Fatimah was informed that the caliph's assigned individuals had forced her employees to quit Fadak and taken control of its affairs in their own hands. Therefore, Lady Fatimah, accompanied a by a group of women of the Banu-Hashim, went to Abu-Bakr and an exchange of words between her and him took place.

Lady Fatimah: "Why did you force my employees out of Fadak and deprive me of my right?"

Abu-Bakr: "I heard from your father that the prophets never leave any thing as inheritance from themselves!"

Lady Fatimah: "My father gave it to me during his lifetime and I was the legal owner of that land during his lifetime."

Abu-Bakr: "Do you have any witness about this issue?"

Lady Fatimah: "Yes I have. My witnesses are Ummu-Ayman and Ali," and both of them testified to her ownership of Fadak during the Holy Prophet's lifetime. While most of the writers have written only the names of Ali and Ummu-Ayman as witnesses, some have mentioned that al-Hasan and al-Husayn were also presented as witnesses. This fact has been narrated by al-Masʿudi and al-Halabi. Even Fakhr al-Din al-Razi has written: "One of the

servants of God's Prophet also witnessed to the truth of Lady Fatimah," but he did not elaborate his name. al-Buladhari has mentioned the name of that servant: "The name of the Prophet's servant was Rabah."

According to historians, the caliph did not regard testimony of one man and one woman to the confirmation of the claim as sufficient! It is possible that the honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** might have brought her two sons al-Hasan and al-Husayn and a servant of the Prophet as additional witnesses. In accordance with Shiite narrations, Asma' bint Umays was also presented as a witness**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. In our traditions, it has been mentioned that the Holy Prophet (s) confirmed the ownership of Lady Fatimah (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** over Fadak in writing, and obviously, she must have submitted it as a document.

Imam Ali (ʿa) reminded Abu-Bakr of his mistake, since demanding witnesses from the possessor of property is against the judicial laws of Islam. He looked at Abu-Bakr and asked, "Whenever I claim a wealth which is possessed by a Muslim, who are you going to ask to provide the witness? Would you ask me, the plaintiff, or the other person who is the possessor of the wealth?" Abu-Bakr replied, "In that case, I would ask you to provide the witness."

Imam Ali (ʿa) said, "For a long time, Fadak has been under our control and in our possession. If now Muslims claim Fadak as public property, they should be asked to bring witnesses instead of asking witnesses from us!" Abu-Bakr had no argument to refute this.

Abu-Bakr's replies

History has recorded Abu-Bakr's replies to Lady Fatimah (ʿa) in different forms. The issue of Fadak was raised repeatedly. There is room to believe that Abu-Bakr gave a reply each time. Here are the possible answers given by him:

1. When the witnesses of Lady Fatimah (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** testified in her favor, Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Abu-Ubaydah testified in favor of Abu-Bakr, saying, "The honorable Prophet having met the living expenses of his family spent the remaining income of Fadak on public works. If Fadak was the property of his daughter, why was a portion of its income spent on other affairs?"

Statements of witnesses of both sides were contradictory and caused Abu-Bakr to stand up to announce their statements as correct, saying,

"Witnesses of both sides speak the truth; their testimonies are correct and I hereby accept the witnesses of all of them, Ali and Ummu-Ayman and Umar and Abu-Ubaydah. Because Fadak was in the possession of Fatimah (ʿa), it was the property of the Prophet (s). He provided for the living expenses of his family from its income and spent the remaining amount among Muslims. I, too, will follow the Prophet's tradition."

The honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet (s) said, "I am also ready to spend the remaining income for the interest of Islam," but Abu-Bakr replied, "I will do it instead of you!"

2. Abu-Bakr did not consider Lady Fatimah's witnesses as convincing for her claim; so, he replied, "The witness of one man and one woman is not sufficient. Either two men or one man and two women are required as witnesses." From Shiite traditions' viewpoint, Abu-Bakr's criticism of the honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet (s) was terribly painful. He rejected the testimony of Ali, al-Hasan, and al-Husayn as being the husband and children of Lady Fatimah when the Holy Prophet (s) took them to testify against the Christians in the famous event of the imprecation of God's curse on the lying party (i.e. *mubahalah*), Ummu-Ayman as being her maid, and Asma' bit Umays as the widow of Jaʿfar ibn Abi-Talib. In this manner, he deprived Lady Fatimah (ʿa) of Fadak.

3. Abu-Bakr found the testimony of Lady Fatimah's witnesses convincing; therefore, he prepared the ownership title for her, but later on, because of Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s insistence, he regarded it null and void. Ibrahim ibn Saʿid al-Thaqafi**Error! Bookmark not defined.** has written in his book *al-Gharat*, "After listening to the statements of the witnesses, Abu-Bakr ultimately decided to return Fadak to the Prophet's daughter. Thus, on a peace of skin, he wrote the ownership title for Fatimah. She came outside Abu-Bakr's home and encountered Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** on the path. He became aware of the matter, asked for the title from her, came to Abu-Bakr, and said: 'You gave Fadak to Fatimah, while Ali has testified in his own interest, and Ummu-Ayman is but a woman.' Then he spat upon the title and tore it apart."

This episode clearly indicates the weakness and inconstancy of Abu-Bakr and the extent to which his judicial judgment was under the influence of others. But al-Halabi has narrated the episode in a different manner: "Abu-Bakr certified Fatimah's ownership. Suddenly, Umar entered and asked, 'What are you writing?' He replied, 'I have certified Fatimah's ownership

on this page.' Umar said, 'You are needful of Fadak's income, because if tomorrow Arab polytheists rebel against Muslims, from where will you provide expenses for the war?' Then he took the page and tore it."

Here, the research about Fadak stands completed, and the file of the event that occurred approximately one thousand and four hundred years ago is prepared anew. Now let us see what the judgment should have been according to the laws of Islam.

Final Judgment about Fadak

The ultimate judgment about Fadak's file shall be presented in the coming chapter, where it will be proved that depriving Lady Fatimah (ʿa) of Fadak was the first greatest oppression recorded in the judicial history of Islam.

Imam al-Sadiq (ʿa) narrated: When the Quranic verse: '*Give the kinsman his due*' was revealed, the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** asked the Archangel Gabriel to explain the meaning of kinsman. So, the Archangel replied, 'It means your relatives.' At that moment, the Holy Prophet (s) called Fatimah and her children and gave Fadak to them, saying, 'God has commanded me to give you Fadak.'

A Question Raised

The Quranic chapter Surah al-Isra' (no. 17) was revealed in Mecca, while Fadak was given to the Muslims in AH 7. How could a verse revealed in Mecca describe an event that occurred years later? The reply to this question is clear. In various Quranic chapters that are considered to have been revealed in Mecca, there are many verses that were revealed in Medina, and vice-versa. Referring to the commentaries and circumstances of the revelation of verses, the point is made clear.

Apart from that, this verse has been revealed in Medina, because the Holy Prophet (s) did not possess any resources in Mecca to enable him to pay the rights of the kinsman, the needy and the wayfarer. In accordance with quotations of commentators not only this verse which is the 26th verse of Surah al-Isra', but also verses 32, 33, 57, 73 to 81 were revealed in Medina. Therefore, the revelation of this chapter in Mecca does not conflict or contradict the revelation of the verse in Medina.

Other factors about the file of Fadak

Why was the judgment not issued in favor of the honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet (s)?

1. Discussion of Abu-Bakr with Umar reveals that their motivation behind Fadak's confiscation was to strengthen the pillars of their own government against opponents and the sole narration of not leaving inheritance by prophets was nothing but an apparent fabrication to give it a religious justification. The reason for this belief is that when Abu-Bakr heard the logical argument presented by Lady Fatimah (ʿa), he decided to return Fadak to her to the extent that the title was written by him in her name. Suddenly, Umar entered the assembly and became aware of the matter. He looked towards Abu-Bakr and said, "Tomorrow, if the Arabs rebel against your government, from where will you arrange expenses to fight them?" Then, he took the title of the deed and tore it.

2. Historians and narrators have narrated that when the verse *"Give the kinsman his due"* was revealed, the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** gave Fadak to Fatimah. The document of authenticity of this tradition terminates with the famous companion Abu-Saʿid al-Khudri. Was it not required on the part of Abu-Bakr to call Abu-Saʿid and ask him about the truth? Abu-Saʿid was not an unknown personality whom Abu-Bakr did not know or could have contradicted his righteousness. Reputable Muslim narrators have never accused Abu-Saʿid of telling any lie. The fact that narrators of traditions are righteous and pious persons and their number is so limited that reason considers any lies on their part as very unlikely. Abu-Saʿid al-Khudri was an authority of traditions and plenty of traditions have been narrated by him. A group of people like Abu-Harun al-ʿUbaydi and Abdullah ibn Alqamah, who were staunch enemies of the family of the Prophet (s), renounced their enmity after consulting him.

3. According to the judicial laws of Islam and the world, whoever is the possessor of the property is regarded as its owner unless proven otherwise. A person who claims its ownership must provide two decent witnesses who should testify in favor of his ownership; otherwise, the court of justice regards the possessor of the property as its owner. The land of Fadak was in the possession of the honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet (s). When the order of occupation was issued by Abu-Bakr, the employees of Lady Fatimah (ʿa) were busy in their work over there. She had been in possession of Fadak's land for several years and her representative and workers over there were a clear sign of her ownership. In spite of that, Abu-Bakr seized Fadak completely denying Lady Fatimah's right as its owner and forced her workers to leave their place of work.

Imam Ali (ʿa), as was mentioned earlier, reminded Abu-Bakr of his mistake. Apart from that, history stands witness about its possession by the

honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet (s). Imam Ali, in one of the letters to the governor of Basra Uthman ibn Hunayf, wrote, "Yes, of whatever was shadowed by the sky, only Fadak was in our possession. A group showed greed upon it and another group closed their eyes to it. God is the Best Arbitrator and Judge."

Here is room for a question: Since the daughter of the Holy Prophet (s) was the owner, the only obligation on her part was to simply take an oath to disgrace her opponent. Then why did she bring persons as witnesses for the judgment? The answer to this question is clear from words quoted earlier from Imam Ali (ʿa). Due to the intense pressure exerted upon her by Abu-Bakr, she agreed to present witnesses; while the family of the Prophet (s) since the moment of possession considered it needless to provide any witnesses.

If the daughter of the Holy Prophet (s) had already arranged some witnesses before this was demanded by Abu-Bakr, it could have been because Muslims might have not been aware of its owner and representative. Fadak was located at a distance of 140 km away from Medina. It is not unlikely that Abu-Bakr was going to ask for witnesses to prove her possession and ownership; therefore, she brought them with her for the judgment. They happened to be her family members, not outsiders. It is probable that they just accompanied her and became witnesses on the spot when asked.

4. There is no doubt that the honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet (s) is free from all impurity, as is openly stated in verse 33 of Surah al-Ahzab (no. 33), which is known as Verse of Divine Purifying. A'ishah has stated that this Quranic verse was revealed about the family of the Prophet (s), and Sunni scholars have also testified that it was meant for Fatimah, her husband, and her two children. Ahmad ibn Hanbal has written in his treatise: "After the revelation of this verse, every time the Prophet (s) came out from his house to perform the Dawn Prayer and passed by the house of Fatimah, he said, 'Prepare for the prayer,' and then he recited this verse and continued doing it for six months."

Was it right for Abu-Bakr to ask the honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet (s) to produce witnesses? There was no plaintiff against her except him. Was it deserving that he should totally ignore the testimony of the Holy Quran about her purity and immunity from filth of any sort, not believe in her, and ask her to present witnesses?

Why did he not apply his knowledge of the purity of Lady Fatimah (ʿa).

Why did he ignore the explicit witness of the Holy Quran about the immunity from sins and mistakes for Lady Fatimah (ʿa), which is far away from any ordinary mistake?

We would like to remind Abu-Bakr that on the basis of the two following Quranic verses, he could have avoided the issue of Fadak by issuing the judgment in favor of the honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet (s):

"*And when you judge between mankind, judge justly*. [4:58]"

"*And among those whom We created there is a nation which guides with truth and establishes justice therewith*. [7:180]"

5. A history of Abu-Bakr shows that he accepted claims of individuals without any witnesses in plenty of cases. For example, when his belongings were brought to Medina from al-Ala' al-Hazrami for the Islamic treasury, Abu-Bakr said to the people, "Whoever has any claims from the Prophet (s) or whoever was promised by him of anything, should come and get it." Jabir came to Abu-Bakr and said, "The Prophet (s) promised to help me with *such-and-such*." Abu-Bakr immediately gave him three thousands and five hundreds dirhams.

Abu-Saʿid has narrated: When such news was circulated by Abu-Bakr, groups of people visited him and received cash. One person named Abu-Bashir al-Mazini**Error! Bookmark not defined.** said, "The Prophet (s) told me that whenever wealth would be brought to him, I should see him," and Abu-Bakr gave him one thousand and four hundred Dirhams.

How did Abu-Bakr accept claims of each plaintiff without asking for any proof or witnesses but he refused to listen to the honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** with the excuse of not having any acceptable witnesses? A judge who is extremely benevolent regarding public property and accepts the claims of loans and probable promises of the Holy Prophet (s), why should he act so miserly when it came to his daughter?!

What prevented Abu-Bakr from accepting the testimony of the honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was that which Ibn Abi'l-Hadid**Error! Bookmark not defined.** narrated from his great teacher Ali ibn al-Fara': I asked my teacher, "Was Lady Fatimah's statement true?" He replied, "Yes, it was." I said, "Did the caliph know that she was a righteous woman?" He replied, "Yes, he did." I said, "Then why did he not give her her absolute right?" At that moment, my teacher smiled and in a dignified manner replied, "If he would have

accepted her words on that day because of her being a righteous woman without any witness and returned Fadak to her, she would have utilized this for the benefit of her own husband, Ali, and said that leadership belonged to Ali. In that case, Abu-Bakr would be helpless and have to return leadership to Ali, because he had already accepted her as righteous. But to close the chapter of claim and argument forever, he deprived her of her absolute right."

File of Fadak is flawless

With such clear documents, why was true judgment prevented for Fadak? Abu-Bakr, in his capacity as the *caliph*, is meant to protect the rights and interests of the community. If Fadak had really been a public domain property that the Holy Prophet (s) had temporarily handed over to one individual of his family, it should have been handed over to the Leader of Muslims and been utilized for the general interest of Muslims. This is accepted by everyone. But it does not mean that private properties of individuals should be seized by declaring them as public domain and nationalized.

The code of Islam pays due respect to individual properties obtained legitimately and the caliphate is responsible for protecting them like public properties that have been officially recognized by Islam. Giving away public domain assets to individuals without regard for overall interests or, seizure of legitimate ownership from individuals, are acts of aggression towards the rights of the individual and the community.

If the claim of the honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet (s) with respect to the ownership of Fadak was in keeping with the judicial regulations, the refusal of the judge to declare the truth was a great crime severely condemned by Islamic law. The caliph should have issued the judgment in favor of the daughter of the Holy Prophet (s) because:

Firstly, it has been repeatedly mentioned that Abu-Bakr decided to return Fadak to its real owner. He wrote the title of deeds for Fadak in the name of Lady Fatimah (ʿa) and gave it to her, but when Umar learned about this issue, he lost his tamper, took the letter from her and tore it. If the file had a flaw in its content, would Abu-Bakr have issued the judgment in her favor and certified her ownership officially?

Secondly, were the witnesses not sufficient to prove the claim of the daughter of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**? Assuming that Lady Fatimah (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** did not

bring any one except Ali (ʿa) and Ummu-Ayman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, were witnesses of these two persons in proving her claim insufficient? In the words of the Holy Prophet (s), "Ali is with the truth and truth is with Ali; he is the axis of truth, and the wheel of reality rotates around it." In spite of that, Abu-Bakr rejected his testimony with the excuse of two men or one man and two women being required to testify.

Thirdly, if the number of witnesses were less than the required, regulations required her to take an oath. In the code of justice in Islam regarding properties and debt, judgment can be made on the testimony of one witness with a solemn oath taken by the claimer. Why did he not use this basic principle before suspending the case?

Fourthly, on the one hand, Abu-Bakr certified the words of the honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet (s) and her witnesses (Ali an Ummu-Ayman), while on the other hand accepted the words of Umar and Abu-Ubaydah who testified that that Holy Prophet (s) distributed Fadak's income among Muslims, and announced his judgment saying: "All of you speak the truth, because Fadak was a public domain property and from its income the Prophet (s) provided the expenses of living for his own family and distributed the remaining income among the Muslims." Was it required that Abu-Bakr should have paid more attention to the statements made by Umar and Abu-Ubaydah, both of whom never testified that Fadak was public domain property? They only witnessed that the Holy Prophet (s) spent its remaining income among the Muslims. This issue did not conflict with Lady Fatimah's ownership of Fadak, because the Holy Prophet (s) was authorized by his honorable daughter to distribute the remaining income among Muslims. But he considered those who testified about the distribution of its remaining income among Muslims and thus decided to deprive Lady Fatimah (ʿa) of Fadak's ownership. It is interesting that Abu-Bakr promised Lady Fatimah (ʿa) that he would follow the Prophet's method of spending the income of Fadak. If Fadak was public property, what was the need of seeking her consent? And, if it was the private property of Lady Fatimah (ʿa), he was not authorized to spend a part of its income on public interests without the owner renouncing the property. So, why did he promise her? Was it an admission of her ownership and his illegal usurpation of the property?

Notwithstanding any thing, let us suppose that Abu-Bakr did not have such authority, but could have consulted the Helpers and the Emigrants and with their permission handed back the property to the daughter of the Holy Prophet (s). Why did he not do that instead of bringing the wrath of Lady

Fatimah (ʿa) upon himself? A similar incident occurred during the lifetime of Holy Prophet (s) and he solved the problem through consultation. In the Battle of Badr, The Prophet's son-in-law (Zaynab's husband), Abu'l-ʿAs was taken as prisoner of war. It was announced that the relatives could get their prisoners released by paying compensation. His wife, Zaynab, lived in Mecca. She sent a necklace that was given to her by her mother Khadijah at the night of her marriage as compensation. When the Holy Prophet's eyes fell upon that necklace, he cried bitterly because he remembered the sacrifices of her mother Khadijah who had helped him during the most difficult period by spending all her wealth for the propagation for Islam. Respect for public property made him look at his companions and say, "This necklace belongs to you and is at your disposal. If you like, you can return it and release Abu'l-ʿAs without compensation." His honorable friends accepted his proposal.

Ibn Abi'l-Hadid**Error! Bookmark not defined.** has written: "I recalled the incident of Zaynab before my teacher Abu-Jaʿfar al-Basri who confirmed it and added, 'Was the position of Fatimah not superior to Zaynab?' Could the caliph not have pleased Fatimah's heart by returning Fadak, even if Fadak happened to be public property?' I said, 'Fadak, according to the tradition quoted by Abu-Bakr (i.e. *we prophets do not leave any heritance*) was the property of Muslims. How was it possible to give away the wealth of Muslims to the daughter of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**?' My teacher replied, 'Was not the necklace of Zaynab that was sent to release Abu'l-ʿAs part of the Muslims' wealth?' I replied, 'The Prophet was master of religious regulations and he possessed leadership to issue such an order, but the *caliphs* do not have such authority.' He answered, 'I do not say that *caliphs* should have taken Fadak by force from the Muslims and given it to Fatimah, I ask why he did not get the opinion of Muslims. Why did he, like the Prophet (s), not rise and say to his companions: O People! Fatimah is the daughter of your Prophet (s); she wants to continue owning the garden of Fadak as she did during the lifetime of the Prophet (s); are you ready with your pious consciences to return Fadak to her?' In front of the logical replies of my teacher, I did not have any argument. In confirmation of his comments, I said: Abu'l-Hasan Abd al-Jabbar, too, criticized the caliphs and said that although their behavior was in keeping with religion but due respect was not given to Lady Fatimah (ʿa) and her position."

Prophets do leave inheritances

Abu-Bakr rested his judgment upon a tradition that deprived the honorable

daughter of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** of inheritance. According to him, the Holy Prophet (s) said, *"Prophets do not leave any inheritance; and their inheritance after their death is charity."* In order to identify a right tradition form a false one, it is required to match the tradition with the Holy Quran. If the Holy Quran does not verify it, then it is not a true narration, even if its narrator was Abu-Bakr.

The Holy Quran has spoken about the prophets possessing inheritance with absolute certainty. Here are the verses that testify about this matter:

"*Lo! I fear my kinsfolk after me, since my wife is barren. Oh, give me from Thy presence a successor; who shall inherit from me and inherit (also) from the house of Jacob. And make him, my Lord, acceptable (unto Thee).* [19:5-6]

Any one will certainly admit that Prophet Zachariah desired a son from God to become his inheritor, because he was scared of other inheritors and he did not want his wealth to be inherited by them. Why he was scared can be clarified later on. Our objective with "*who shall inherit from me*" in the above verse means that he should inherit his wealth. This word cannot be used for other than inheritors of wealth, like an inheritor of knowledge and prophethood. Until there is a definite indication of the second kind, inheritance here would mean only wealth and not knowledge and prophethood. Currently, the indication confirming that what is meant with "*who shall inherit from me and inherit (also) from the house of Jacob*" is inheritance in wealth and not inheritance of prophethood and knowledge.

1. If you search the entire Holy Quran, you will find that this word has been used for inheritance of wealth and nothing else (except in verses 32 of Surah Fatir). This in itself is proof that these two words should be used for their common and apparent meanings.

2. Prophethood and being a messenger is a divine blessing that is bestowed upon superior individuals on acquiring a series of sublime virtues, after great struggle and sacrifice. This grace is not given to any one unworthy even though he happens to be a prophet's child. Therefore, Zachariah could not have requested God for a child who could have been his inheritor in prophethood because he was afraid that his kinsfolk might become prophets. This issue is explained in the Holy Quran that reads: "*God knoweth best with whom to place His message.* [6:124]"

3. Zachariah not only asked God for the child but also desired that his successor should be pious and acceptable to God. If the aim was

inheritance in wealth, only then did Zachariah pray *"Make him my Lord, acceptable unto Thee"* to make him acceptable, because very often the inheritor of wealth could be an undesirable person. But if the aim is inheritor for prophethood, such a prayer would be like asking God to send a prophet and make him pious and desirable!

4. Zachariah in his prayer mentions that he is scared of masters and cousins. But what was the origin of Zachariah's fear? Was he afraid that after him prophethood would be given to an unworthy person, and thereby requests a worthy child for himself? It is obvious that this probability is not valid because God never assigns prophethood to any unworthy person. Zachariah could have requested God to send a prophet, an inheritor from his own progeny, or from others' progeny, to save people from returning to atheism. But Zachariah prayed only for an inheritor for himself.

Regarding the verse under discussion, there are two questions raised by Sunni scholars that need to be investigated:

They argue that John received prophethood during his fathers' life but was martyred before his father. On this basis, the word *inheritor* could be interpreted as inheritor of prophethood and not as inheritor of wealth.

This objection is valid for both conditions; whether it be inheritance in prophethood or in wealth. The aim of inheritance is that he should inherit after the death of his father. God accepted his prayer though Zachariah's hope that the child would inherit from him did not fall through.

The Holy Quran also states: "*And Solomon was David's heir.* [27:16]"

This verse means that Solomon inherited wealth and kingdom from David; and inheritance of knowledge is not included, because the word *heir* means inheriting wealth, whereas inheriting knowledge is opposed to its apparent meaning without presenting a correct analogy to prove it otherwise.

Acquired knowledge is transferred from a teacher to a student and therefore it is correct to say that one is heir of his teacher's knowledge, but prophethood and divine knowledge are blessings and not acquired or inherited; God bestows them upon whomever He wills. All prophets received them from God and not from their fathers.

God has explained David and Solomon's case in the Holy Quran: "*And verily, We gave knowledge unto David and Solomon, and they said, 'Praise be to God, Who hath preferred us above many of His believing slaves!'* [27:15]"

God bestowed knowledge and learning upon both individuals; and knowledge was a divine grace and not inheritance. Therefore, the abovementioned verses show that divine regulations for past prophets were that their children did inherit wealth and property from them.

The honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet (s) on the strength of these two verses proved Abu-Bakr's narration as baseless, saying, "This Book of God is the ruler, explicit administrator of justice and ultimate decision-maker that says that John from Zachariah and from the House of Jacob took inheritance. It also says that Solomon inherited from David."

Abu-Bakr's narration*Error! Bookmark not defined.*

The Holy Quran very explicitly demonstrates that that prophet's inheritors inherited from them, and their inheritance was not distributed as charity among impoverished and deserving people. It would be appropriate to investigate the traditions that Sunni scholars have narrated to justify the action of Abu-Bakr in depriving the honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet (s) of her father's inheritance. The narration quoted by Abu-Bakr took the following forms:

1. "*We, the groups of prophets, do not leave any inheritance of gold, silver, land and home; we leave faith, wisdom, and knowledge as our inheritance.*"

2. "*Prophets do not leave any inheritance* (or hereditary doesn't materialize)."

3. "*We leave nothing as inheritance; whatever is left by us is charity.*"

These are the various texts of the tradition that has been narrated by Sunnis. Abu-Bakr **Error! Bookmark not defined.**referred to the third text. Abu-Hurayrah narrated a fourth text, but Abu-Bakr al-Jawhari, in *al-Saqifah,* admitted the invalidity of his text.

The first text means that it was not appropriate for prophets to spend their noble lives in gathering gold, silver, water, land and estates and leave their wealth as an inheritance for their inheritors; memories left from them consist of wisdom and knowledge. This is different from saying that if a prophet spent his life guiding and helping people and lived a very pious and ascetic life, his belongings, after his death, should be taken immediately from his inheritors and be given in charity because of the command that prophets do not leave any inheritance.

Or, the objective of this tradition is that the community of prophets and

their inheritors should not expect them to leave any wealth, because they did not come for this purpose; rather, they were divinely appointed to propagate religion, ethics, knowledge and wisdom among people and left these things as their memories. From Shiite intellectuals, a narration about this context has been narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (ʿa) that proves that this was the aim of the Prophet (s): "Scholars are inheritors of prophets, because prophets did not leave any silver or golden coin as their inheritance; rather, they left their own traditions as their memorials."

The objective of this tradition and similar traditions is that the dignity of prophets is not accumulation of wealth and leaving worldly inheritance; rather, they leave knowledge and faith for their community. Therefore, this interpretation does not testify that if a prophet has left something, it should be taken from the hands of his inheritors. This explanation makes clear the objective behind the second text.

In reality, what the Prophet (s) said was not more then one tradition; and during its narration, an unwarranted change was made and presented in a short form. Until this point, the first and second traditions have been narrated correctly and their conflict with the Holy Quran that proves the inheritance of prophets' children from them has been obviated. Now the real problem rests with the last tradition because it very clearly states that whatever is left by prophets should be taken over in the name of charity.

It should be asked whether the aim of this tradition is a command applicable to all the prophets, its context contradicts the Holy Quran and regarded as invalid; but, if this command is applicable only to the Prophet of Islam (s), it does not contain an overall contradiction with the Holy Quran. As a rule, the verses of the Holy Quran about the general laws of inheritance and its distribution among inheritors should also be applicable to the Prophet of Islam. However, acting instead according to a tradition alone makes the authenticity and absolute accuracy of this tradition necessary to the extent that on its basis those verses of the Holy Quran can be set aside. Unfortunately, the tradition upon which Abu-Bakr acted is not creditable because of the following reasons:

1. Among all of the companions of Holy Prophet (s), Abu-Bakr was the only person to narrate this tradition. Ibn Hajar testified him as being the most learned one for being the only one to narrate this tradition!

Yes, the only thing that has been mentioned in history is that in a debate that Ali (ʿa) had with al-Abbas about the Prophet's inheritance, Umar,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** while arbitrating between them,

referred to information narrated by Abu-Bakr, and five people in that gathering testified to its accuracy. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid**Error! Bookmark not defined.** has written: "After the demise of the Prophet (s), Abu-Bakr in narrating this tradition was the only person and no one else narrated it. Occasionally, it has been said that Malik ibn Aws, too, narrated the relevant tradition. Yes, some of the Emigrants during the reign of Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** testified to its accuracy."

Therefore, is it true that Abu-Bakr who himself was a party in a judicial dispute testified to a tradition that no one else knew except him? It is possible that a judge can judge the dispute according to his personal knowledge and awareness of the facts, and since Abu-Bakr had heard this tradition from the Prophet (s), he was in a position to believe in his own knowledge and set aside the verses of the Holy Quran concerning the laws of inheritance.

Unfortunately, the contradictory actions of Abu-Bakr and his hesitation in giving Fadak and taking it back again very clearly demonstrates his uncertainty and lack of confidence concerning the authenticity of the narration. It becomes difficult to believe that Abu-Bakr had acted firmly when he set aside the Book of God on the basis of the narration that he alone had heard from the Prophet.

2. If God's command was that the Prophet's property should be nationalized and spent on the interests of Muslims, why did he not make it known to everyone or speak about this matter with his only surviving inheritor? Is it possible that the Holy Prophet (s) should not talk about the divine command to the person it was especially relevant; i.e. his daughter? No, such a thing is not possible, because the infallibility of the Holy Prophet (s) and the immunity from sin would be at great risk. Lady Fatimah's refusal to accept the tradition proves that it was a fabrication of those who wanted to deprive the real inheritor of the Prophet (s) of her legitimate right for political reasons.

3. If the Prophetic tradition narrated by Abu-Bakr was true, then why was the issue of Fadak continually under conflicting inclinations, struggles, and political considerations, and every ruler during his tenure treated it in a different manner? Referencing to history would clearly demonstrate that Fadak, during the rulers' reigns, never maintained a steady position. Occasionally, it was returned to its real owners, while at other times it was seized. In every period, it remained a sensitive and intricate Islamic issue.

4. In addition to Fadak, the Holy Prophet (s) also had some other

inheritance, but the pressure was exerted only upon Fadak's inheritance. Other properties left by the Holy Prophet (s) were the homes of his wives that remained in their possession as usual. Abu-Bakr did not intervene at all; he never dispatched any one to determine whether it was the property of the Prophet (s) or he had bestowed it to his wives during his lifetime. Abu-Bakr neither investigated about it nor asked permission from his daughter A'ishah to be buried therein, because he regarded her as inheritor of the Prophet (s)!

Likewise, the Holy Prophet's ring, turban, swords, mount and dresses that were in the possession of Imam Ali (ʿa) were not taken from him. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, in the face of such gross discrimination, is so astonished and embarrassed that he tries to fabricate some sort of his own unreasonable and baseless justification.

Was the deprival of inheritance limited only to the Prophet's daughter, or was it applicable to all his inheritors? Was there actually no such tradition whatsoever, and only political motivations deprived Lady Fatimah (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** of her inheritance? Why did the honorable daughter of Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** say, "O son of Abu-Quhafah! Is it in the Book of God that you inherit from your father and I should be deprived of my father's inheritance? What astonishing act you are performing! Did you intentionally renounce the Book of God, throw it away behind your back, or imagine that I do not inherit from my father's inheritance and that there are no family bonds between me and him? Has God revealed a special verse to you in which He separated my father from the laws of inheritance or do you claim that two followers of the same religion do not inherit from each other? Are my father and I not followers of the same religion? Are you more aware about the common and special contexts of the Holy Quran than my father and cousin? Take this mount with its saddles and bridles; on the Day of Judgment, you are going to encounter me. Then you will see how good an arbitrator God is and how good a leader Muhammad (s) is. Our meeting place will be the Day of Judgment and on that day, the followers of falsehood shall be losers."

With such a clear speech, is it possible that the tradition quoted was accurate? What sort of information is this which is only relevant to the honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet (s) and his cousin and yet, they themselves did not know about it, whereas a stranger who has no relevance with the tradition knew it?

In conclusion, the following points need to be emphasized:

A. The dispute between the honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and the ruler of the time was about four things: (1) inheritance of the Holy Prophet**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, (2) Fadak, which the Prophet had given to her during his lifetime and is called *nihlah,* a thing given to a particular person as a gift, (3) the share of kinsfolk mentioned in Surah al-Anfal, verse 41, and (4) government and vicegerency.

In her speech, Lady Fatimah (ʿa) made reference to all these issues. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid has debated about these issues in detail.

B. Some Shiite scholars, like Sayyid Murtada, have interpreted the fourth text of the tradition: *"We leave nothing as heritance; whatever is left from us is charity*." He says that it does not show any conflict with the inheritance of the Holy Prophet's daughter. According to his interpretation, this means that *Whatever we leave as charity is not included in the inheritance*. Therefore, needless to explain, it is obvious that things that were declared as charity during the Holy Prophet's lifetime could not be included in the inheritance. This is different from saying that the Holy Prophet (s) never left anything as inheritance. But this interpretation is not without objection, because this issue has nothing to do with the Prophet (s). In fact, whatever any Muslim assigns as a trust or charity during his life isn't considered as inheritance and never reaches his children, be he a prophet or an ordinary person.

C. In general, the words spoken by the honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet (s) either in her speech or during discussions with Abu-Bakr clearly prove that she was extremely angry and annoyed by the current situation of Abu-Bakr and his allies, and this anger lasted to the last spark of her life.

Wrath of Lady Fatimah*Error! Bookmark not defined.*

Fadak was taken away from Lady Fatimah (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and she left this world filled with wrath against Abu-Bakr and his allies—an undeniable fact recorded in all books on history of Islam. For example, al-Bukhari, the famous Sunni narrator, writes: "When Abu-Bakr, on the basis of a tradition which he had heard from the Holy Prophet (s),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** deprived Fatimah of Fadak, she was extremely angry with him and she did not speak to him until her passing away."

Ibn Qutaybah, in *al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah* 1/4, quoted the following: "Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** said to Abu-Bakr, 'Let us go to Fatimah because we have angered her.' They came to her house and asked permission to enter, but she did not permit them to visit her. Then, with Ali's mediation, they were permitted to visit her. She turned her face away from them and did not answer their salutations. After offering consolations to the Prophet's daughter, they explained why they had denied Fadak to her, but she replied, 'I ask you to swear in the name of God that you did not hear the Prophet (s) saying: Fatimah's consent is my consent and her wrath is my wrath; Fatimah is my daughter, whoever pleases her has pleased me and whoever made her angry has made me angry?'

Both of them testified that they had heard this from the Holy Prophet (s); so, Lady Fatimah added, 'I take witness of God and His angels that you have made me angry and when I meet the Prophet, I will complain against both of you.' Abu-Bakr replied, 'I take refuge in God from your wrath and the Prophet's wrath.' At that point, Abu-Bakr started weeping and said, 'I swear by God that after every prayer, I will pray for you.' He said that and in a crying state left her house. People surrounded him and he said, 'Every one of you will spend the night in perfect peace because of your piousness, while you have directed me to such a task. I do not need your allegiance. Remove me from the position of caliphate.'**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

It has been authentically and unanimously reported that the Holy Prophet (s) said, "Fatimah is part of my body; whoever makes her angry has made me angry."

IMAM ALI AND THE COUNCIL

The process of selecting a ruler after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** had different methods and ways; thus, Abu-Bakr, Umar, and Uthman came to power according to different methods. As for Abu-Bakr, he was selected with the help of the Helpers that had assembled in Saqifah and later on, the allegiance of Emigrants was willingly or unwillingly attached to it. Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was nominated to the next leadership by Abu-Bakr, while Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was selected through a council of six persons appointed by Umar.

These different methods testify that there was no official order issued by the Holy Prophet (s) regarding the appointment of a leader by the people**Error! Bookmark not defined.**; otherwise, it was not possible that those who ruled after him would be selected after his demise through different methods. They also testify to the fact that succession to the Holy Prophet (s) is appointed by God. But unfortunately, leaders of that nation completely ignored the appointment made by the Holy Prophet (s) and motivated people to select a leader themselves. Selecting a leader was something completely new for the directors behind the scene because they did not have any previous training for such a task; therefore, each subsequent leader was selected in different ways.

*Abu-Bakr pays in kind for Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s political favors*

Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** tried his best to get Abu-Bakr selected for caliphate, so that after Abu-Bakr, who was a lot older in age as compared to him, the position of caliphate would be in his hands. Imam Ali (ʿa) looked at Umar and said: *"Milk it carefully, so that you too can benefit from it. Tie it strongly today, so that, tomorrow, it can be returned to you."* Abu-Bakr, too, didn't forget his kind political maneuvers nor did he show disloyalty towards him, and, in the last moment of his life, when he was lying sick in bed, called Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and ordered him to write the following:

"This is the testimony of Abdullah ibn Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**[1] for the Muslims during the last moments of his life in this

(1) It is the name of Abu-Bakr.

world and the first moments in the hereafter. At this hour, a believer with efforts, belief and righteousness, as well as an infidel, are at the stage of surrender."

When the dictation of the caliph reached this point, he fainted. Uthman,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** assuming that the caliph had passed away without completing his will, completed the testimony of caliph himself, by adding: *"After him, has appointed son of al-Khattab as caliph."* It wasn't long after that the caliph regained consciousness, and Uthman read for him whatever he had added by himself. Abu-Bakr asked Uthman: *"Why have you written my will in such a manner?"* He replied: *"I knew that you don't have any one else in your mind except him."* Even if this incident is fabricated, it can still be said that Uthman wasn't influenced in this selection, but like an experienced diplomat he played his act skillfully. After years, the time arrived when finally Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** had to return Uthman's diplomatic obligations by appointing him as his own successor through a perfect plan.

Ethnic discrimination and social injustice established

One of the greatest distinctions of Islam that still attracts a large number of impoverished and oppressed people of the world is the condemnation of any sort of ethnical discrimination, and its slogan is that *the most honorable amongst you are the most pious ones.* During the period of the Holy Prophet (s),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** soldiers and government employees did not have any specified salaries; their living expenses were provided from the income of spoils of war. The spoils obtained through combats against polytheists was distributed among the soldiers after subtraction of one-fifth *(khums),****Error! Bookmark not defined.*** and the previous records of people, their race, or relationship with the Prophet (s) wasn't taken into consideration.

During the reign of the first caliph, the same procedure continued to be practiced, but it was changed during the period of the second caliph. The expansion of Islam caused the caliph to record the salaries of government servants and soldiers. But unfortunately, the basis of salaries, instead of piety, became military capability, previous records of service, race, and social positions. In this system, an Arab soldier was preferred over the non-Arab, the descendants of Qahtan over the descendants of Adnan, the members of the Mudhar tribe over those of Rabiʿah, people of Quraysh over the others, and the Banu-Hashim over the Banu-Umayyah; and the salaries of the first group were more then the salaries of the second group.

Famous historians like Ibn al-Athir, al-Yaʿqubi, and George Zaydan in their own histories have described in detail the difference of salaries of soldiers and servants of the Islamic government. The difference in compensation is terribly amazing. The salary of Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib**Error! Bookmark not defined.** the famous wealthy person was 12,000 Dirhams per year, while the salary of an Egyptian soldier wasn't more than 300. Salaries of each wife of the Prophet (s) were 6,000 Dirhams per year, while the salary of a soldier from Yemen wasn't more than 400. The salary of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and his father Abu-Sufyan**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was 5000 Dirhams per year while the salary of an ordinary person of Mecca who hadn't migrated was only 600.

With this act, the caliph once again activated ethnical discrimination that was condemned by the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet (s),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and established an unjust social system in Islamic society. It wasn't very long after that that a horrible split was established in Islamic society and accumulators of wealth and world worshippers, with the support of the caliph, competed with each other in accumulating silver and gold and the ground was laid for the oppression of hardworking people and workers.

Although he seized the wealth of the commanders and a group of world-worshippers like Saʿd ibn Abi-Waqqas, Amr ibn al-Aas, and Abu-Hurayrah, and tried to maintain the distance between various classes within a certain limit, but since his earlier decisions and economic plans were based upon social superiorities, seizure of properties didn't produce any fruitful results and made things easier for the future leader, who was basically a racist, to remain more open towards social discrimination.

Accumulators of wealth in society created greater purchasing power and the rich bought slaves and forced them to work hard in order to meet expenses of their own living, as well as pay a daily or monthly amount to their masters. The helpless poor slaves ran from morning till evening and almost killed themselves in order to pay their master's dues.

A non-Arab worker demands justice from the caliph

Fayruz, famous as Abu-Lu'lu'ah, was a Persian slave of al-Maghirah ibn Shuʿbah. In addition to meeting his own living expanses, he was forced to pay two Dirhams to his master. One day, his eyes fell upon the caliph in the bazaar and he demanded justice from him, saying, "Al-Maghirah has imposed a back-breaking burden upon me." The caliph who was very well

aware of his skills asked him, "What is your specialty?" He replied, "Carpentry, painting and smelting iron." The caliph replied naively, "Compared to your skills, his dues aren't too much, but I have also heard that you can make a flour-mill that works with air. Can you make such a flour-mill for me?" Fayruz who was very upset with the caliph's words, secretly decided to kill him and in reply said to him, "I can make a flourmill for you that would be unique in the east and west." The caliph was upset with the daring words of a non-Arab worker and said to some one who was in his company, "This Persian slave has threatened to kill me."

By the end of his caliphate, he was aware that the health of the Islamic society had been polluted and calamities of tyranny and oppression were growing in it speedily. Therefore, he promised people that if he remained alive, he would visit them throughout the year and hear their grievances personally since some complaints didn't reach him. According to Dr. Ali al-Wardi, the second caliph said, "By practicing discrimination and preference of some over others, I didn't mean any thing except pleasing hearts. If I remain alive in the forthcoming year, I will establish equality among all people, remove ethnical discrimination completely and treat black and white, Arab and non-Arab, on the same scale as done by Abu-Bakr and the Prophet (s)."(1)

Yet, death created a distance between him and his desires, and Fayruz's knife terminated his life. His establishing the horrible discrimination passed down to the third caliph causing Islamic society to encounter the powerful wrath of the masses. Fayruz's knife expressed the wrath of the hardworking masses. Had the caliph not been murdered by Fayruz's knife, a greater number of knives would have killed him.

Our writers imagine that class differences and racial discrimination in Islamic society was established during Uthman's government, while the fact is that during his government it only reached its climax and resulted in the uprising against the government from near and far areas; but the criteria and basis were actually founded during the period of the second caliph. He was the first person to say, "It is shameful indeed that Arabs should arrest other Arabs while God has already prepared the vast expanded land of Persia for making arrests."(2)

More shameful than this was his deviation of Islamic teaching when he

(1) The role of preachers in Islam, page 84.

(2)George Zaydan, *al-Tarikh* 4/35.

said, “The children of non-Arabs can only inherit from inheritors if they have been born in the Arab lands.”[1]

One example of his discriminations was that he never permitted Persians in Medina to possess their own dwellings and if Fayruz lived in Medina, it was because of the permission that he had obtained earlier. It was the result of such discrimination that resulted in a plot by three Persians, Fayruz, Prince Harmazan and Jufaynah, Abu-Lu'lu’ah’s daughter, which caused his death. He was injured by the stroke of Fayruz’s knife and died after three days.

It was expected that the caliph, having tasted the bitter fruit of deviation from the path of truth, would naturally think correctly and, at least, select the most worthy leader after him. But unfortunately, he appointed a council that would deprive the most deserving leader and most certainly select the racist, who in Umar’s own words: “If he takes over leadership affairs in his hand, he will mount his kinsfolk upon the peoples’ shoulders.” In spite of this profound awareness, he ordered the formation of a council about which Imam Ali (ʿa) said in his sermon, “O God, I need your help against that council!”

All details of the council shall be quoted and then a judgment will certainly be made concerning the historical episode that brought a lot of bitterness and eventually caused the Umayyads to take over control of the Islamic government for one hundred years followed by the Abbasids.

Selection of the council members

The absolute certainty of the caliph’s death brought messages from every corner and street for the appointment of his successor. A'ishah, through Abdullah ibn Hudhayfah, sent him a message not to leave Muhammad’s community without appointing a shepherd and selecting a successor himself as soon as possible, because she was scared of mischief and riots. Umar’s son said the same words, “If you call the shepherds of your own cattle before you, wouldn’t you like him to appoint his successor to prevent attack upon his flock?” People who paid courtesy visits to see him also reminded the caliph and some of them even suggested appointing his son Abdullah as his successor. The caliph was aware of the incompetence of his son; so, he offered excuses and said, “For the family of al-Khattab, one person is enough to bear the responsibility of caliphate upon his neck.”

(1) Sharaf al-Din, *al-Nass wa’l-Ijtihad*, page 60.

Then he asked for six persons with whom the Prophet (s) was pleased at the time of his death, so that he could assign the responsibility of selecting the next caliph of Muslims upon their shoulders. These six people were: Ali (ʿa), Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Talhah, al-Zubayr, Saʿd ibn Abi-Waqqas**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Abd al-Rahman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Awf. When these six people gathered around caliph's bed, he lost his temper and harshly said, "Inevitably, all of you want to take over leadership affairs in your hands after me!"

Then Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** said things about of all of them except Ali (ʿa) and, after giving reasons, rejected all of them from the caliphate. Then he looked at Ali (ʿa) and couldn't find any weakness in him except his possessing a sense of humor! Then he added, "If he could take over leadership affairs in his hands, he would be able to guide people on the straight path of truth very clearly." In the end, he looked towards Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and said, "I can see that the people of Quraysh will appoint you as leader and ultimately you will impose the Umayyads and the Maʿits upon people, allowing them free access to Muslim treasury, and then angered Arabs will rebel against you and kill you inside your own house." He added further, "If such an incident occurs, remember my words."

Then, looking towards the group, he said, "If you will help each other, you and your children will eat from the fruits of the tree of caliphate. But if you harbor envy against each other, I can see Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** grabbing the caliphate for himself."

When Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** finished talking, he called Muhammad ibn Maslamah and said to him, "When you return from my burial ceremony, accompanied by fifty armed people, invite these six people for leadership affairs. Gather all of them inside a house and then appoint those fifty armed people to guard that house until they elect one person as caliph from amongst themselves. If five people of them reach an agreement and one of them disagrees, cut off his neck; if four unite, cut off the necks of the two who oppose them; and if these six people are divided into two groups of three, the right belongs to Abd al-Rahman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Awf's group. Then invite the other group to join them. If they don't agree, cut off the necks of the three persons of the opposite group. If, after three days, no agreement is reached, cut off the necks of all six persons and let the Muslims be free to select their own leader."

After people returned from Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s burial ceremony, Muhammad ibn Maslamah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** accompanied by fifty people holding unsheathed swords in their hands, gathered the council members inside a house and informed them about Umar's order. The first thing which was done was that Talhah whose relationship with Ali (ʿa) was strained, renounced his candidacy in favor of Uthman. He knew that in the presence of Ali and Uthman, nobody was going to select him as caliph, so what could be better than renouncing in favor of Uthman and reducing chances of Ali's selection? The strained relationship of Talhah with Ali (ʿa) was that he, too, like Abu-Bakr, belonged to the tribe of Taym whose relations with the Hashemite became intensely strained after the selection of Abu-Bakr as caliph, and continued for a long period.

Al- al-Zubayr was the son of Ali's paternal aunt and Ali was the son of his maternal uncle. He renounced his candidacy in favor of Ali (ʿa), and Saʿd ibn Abi-Waqqas left the scene in favor of Abd al-Rahman because both of them belonged to the tribe of Zuhrah. Eventually, three people remained in the council. Each of them was required to have two other votes and victory belonged to the person who won the support of one person. At this crucial juncture, Abd al-Rahman **Error! Bookmark not defined.**said, "Who is ready between the two of you to leave the contest in favor of the other?" Both of them remained silent and didn't say anything. Abd al-Rahman continued and said, "I take both of you as witness that I leave the contest in order to appoint one of you as caliph."

Then, looking towards Ali (ʿa), he said to him, "I will make allegiance with you if you will follow the Book of God, the traditions of the Prophet, and the traditions of the two caliphs." Ali (ʿa) didn't accept the last condition and replied, "I am ready to accept your allegiance on condition that I will act in accordance with the Book of God, the traditions of the Prophet, and my own jurisprudence and knowledge." Since Abd al-Rahman heard this negative reply form Ali (ʿa), he looked towards Uthman and repeated the same question to him and he replied immediately, "Yes, I am ready to accept." Then Abd al-Rahman put his hand upon Uthman's hand and saluted him as the caliph! The result of the election was also announced to the Muslims waiting outside.

The result of the council wasn't something that Ali (ʿa) wasn't aware of from the very beginning. Even Ibn Abbas after being aware of the combination of council members announced Ali's deprivation of caliphate for the third time. Therefore, when the son of Awf played his role well in

making allegiance with Uthman, Ali (ʿa) looking towards him, said, "Expecting that Uthman will return the caliphate to you at the end of his age, you have selected him, just as Umar had selected Abu-Bakr with same expectation, but I hope that God will create division and obstruction between you."

Historians have written that it wasn't very long after that relations of the son of Awf with Uthman became strained and they did not talk to each other until Abd al-Rahman died. Imam Ali's view is found in his famous sermon known as al-Shaqshaqiyyah, the third sermon of Nahj al-Balaghah:

"Before Umar died, he handed over leadership affairs to the discretion of a council of six persons and imagined that I, too, was just like the other members. O God, I needed your help against that council. Was my right under doubt when I encountered Abu-Bakr until today, when I was treated as equivalent to these persons? Helplessly, I agreed with them and participated in the council. But one of the members [Saʿd ibn Abi-Waqqas] having a grudge against me turned his face away from me and left in favor of my opponent, and another one [ʿAbd al-Rahman ibn Awf], because of kinship, voted in his favor. Regarding the two other members, it would be shameful even to mention their names."

In *Nahj al-Balaghah*, there is nothing except these words. But, for readers to become thoroughly familiar with the severe crimes of actors and directors, who played tricks behind the scene in the political arena as well as the caliph, the following point needs to be reflected upon:

Review of Umar*Error! Bookmark not defined.****'s council***

In this review, only sensitive points shall be discussed.

1. Various groups proposed to the second caliph to select a successor himself. This proves that ordinary people know that the chief of Muslims should appoint the leader in his own life; otherwise, sedition and riots would engulf entire society and blood would be spilled in this path. How, then, do Sunni scholars say that the Holy Prophet (s) passed away without doing the needful?

2. The appointment of successor by the caliph indicates that any proposal of selection through a council, after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was without any basis, and such a suggestion had never existed at all. How is it possible that in case of any explicit order by the Holy Prophet (s) for appointment by a council, proposals were made to the second caliph to appoint his successor? The

selection by a council, without considering the appointment of an Imam by God, is the most reasonable method of forming a government. Their supporters want to declare that the basis of government in Islam after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s) is selection by a council. However, it is really astonishing that such a government was never established during any period of Islamic history. Can it be said that the companions of the Holy Prophet (s) together committed a blunder and completely disregarded the Prophet's instructions as if there were none?

3. Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** in response to the people said, "Had Abu-Ubaydah been alive, I would have appointed him as my successor, because I have heard from the Prophet that he was a trustee of this community, and if Salim, the former servant of Abu-Hudhayfah, had been alive, I would have appointed him as my successor, because I have heard from the Prophet that he was a friend of God."

At that sensitive and crucial moment, instead of thinking about living persons, he was thinking about the dead which, apart from being an innovation of dead-worshipping, was being so naïve about the people who were living during his own period. Apart from that, if the criterion of selection of Salim and Abu-Ubaydah was that the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** had called them a trustee of the community and friend of God, then what made Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** forget the son of Abu-Talib? He was the person about whom the Prophet (s) had said, "Ali is with the truth and the truth is with Ali." He was more aware, as compared to others, about the distinguished and exalted academic position of Ali ('a), his virtues, righteousness, unique and outstanding judicial judgments, heroism, sacrifices and knowledge of the Quran and Prophetic traditions; why didn't he remember Ali ('a)?

4. If the position of caliphate is a social position, his selection should be done through public opinion. Selection of the caliph by a council, whose members have been appointed by the caliph himself, is accepting neither a divine appointment nor public opinion. If the future caliph could be appointed by the previous caliph, why was the task assigned to a council of six persons?

If Sunnis believe that the caliph should be appointed on the basis of popular agreement of elderly intellectuals, the opinion of the previous caliph doesn't carry the least value. But it's not known why they considered this act as valid and approved the formation of a council of six people as an inevitable act. If the right to selection lays with the people, why did the

caliph deprive them of their rights and assign it to a council whose members were selected by him?

5. It is unclear why the membership of the council was limited to these six individuals. If the reason was that at the time of his demise, God's Prophet (s) was contented with them, this criterion was equally valid to include Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Hudhayfah al-Yamani, Abu-Dharr, al-Miqdad, Ubayy ibn Kaʿb and many others. For example, the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** said about Ammar, "Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** is the axis of truth and truth revolves around him."

About Abu-Dharr, he said, "The earth hasn't produced and the sky hasn't covered one who is more honest than Abu-Dharr."

Nevertheless, why ʿ Umar deprive these people from the membership of the council and appoint only individuals who had strained relations with Ali (ʿa)? Only one was a supporter of Ali (ʿa), al-Zubayr, whereas four were die-hard opponents. If the criterion was fighting in the battles of Badr and Uhud, and being an Emigrant, this criterion was also equally valid for other individuals. Why amongst all of them was this special group selected?

6. The caliph claimed that he had appointed them because the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was contented with them, while during his discussion with the members of the council, he said to Talhah, "During the revelation of the Quranic verses about veil (hijab), you uttered a word that angered God's Prophet and he was angered with you until his death." Which ones of these two quotations should be accepted? To al-Zubayr he said, "You are a human being one day, while a devil on the other day!" Could such a person be allowed to select or become the caliph of Muslims? In case, he participated with satanic intentions that could prevent his satanic thoughts?

7. He said to Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, "If you become caliph, you will mount the Umayyads and the Maʿits upon the peoples' shoulders..." Does such a person deserve to elect or be the caliph of the community? Then he requested Uthman to help him in such a sensitive moment. How did he forecast the future? Or, had he formed the council in a manner where the appointment of Uthman and rejection of Ali (ʿa) was made absolutely certain?

8. Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** only said something which Amr ibn al-Aas used later as an excuse. He said, "Ali possesses a sense of

humor." Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was a perfect example of those capabilities needed by a caliph as described by Umar: "If he could take over leadership affairs in his hands, he would be able to guide people on the straight path of truth very clearly."***Error! Bookmark not defined.***

9. Why did Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** assign special veto power to Abd al-Rahman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Awf and say that in case of equal voting on both sides, the group including Abd al-Rahman would have the priority? In case of equal voting on both sides, the problem of equality had to be resolved so the caliph solved this problem by giving the veto power to Abd al-Rahman. Giving veto power to Abd al-Rahman was only meant to strengthen the ground for Uthman's absolute victory. Abd al-Rahman was the husband of Uthman's sister, and kinship ties would certainly have played their part.

Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** could have assigned another group as the authority for ultimate decision-making if both the groups got equal votes. The ultimate decision could be backed by the approval of the righteous companions of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and not the opinion of Abd al-Rahman,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** husband of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s sister and belonging to Saʿd ibn Abi-Waqqas's family.

10. Umar,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** while suffering severe pain, said to the people present in that assembly, "After me, don't be divided and be careful from being divided into two opposite camps, because in that case the caliphate will belong to Muʿawiyah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who will grab the government from you." Nevertheless, he gave veto rights to Abd al-Rahman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who was a close family member of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Muʿawiyah. Both of them were the bitter fruit of the unclean tree of the Umayyads and Uthman's caliphate was a ground for the establishment of Muʿawiyah's government after Uthman.

It is astonishing that the caliph occasionally seized the wealth of his commanders and removed them from their positions, but he never intervened or touched Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s government. He left him completely free in Damascus to accumulate wealth and strengthen the pillars of his own government, in spite of being completely aware that Muʿawiyah didn't discharge his duties like an ordinary governor and his palace wasn't less than that of Caesar and

Khosrow. Can it not be said that there were wheels and deals within, and the objective was to strengthen the situation of the Umayyads,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who were bloody enemies of the Hashemites before accepting Islam? Yes, indeed! The objective was that, if one day, the Hashemites become powerful in the center of Islam (Medina) and people supported them, one external power should constantly be there to destabilize them.

11. Pretending honesty, Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** said, "Don't vote for my son Abdullah, because he doesn't know how to divorce his own wife." But, he still appointed him as adviser to the council and said, "If the members of the council have three equal votes, parties should follow the opinion of my son." But he didn't allow al-Hasan ibn Ali (ʿa) or Abdullah ibn Abbas to be members of the council or its advisors. He said that they could participate in the council as silent observers![1]

12. What could have happened if Umar,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** like Abu-Bakr, had appointed Ali (ʿa) as his successor and thereby controlled a lot of corruption and mischief-making? In that case, the Umayyads from Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** till Marwan would have neither power nor courage and opportunity to rebel. The issue of feuds, looting of the Islamic treasury, discrimination, weakening of people's faith and belief, a change in conduct of the ruling regime and a strengthening of the etiquettes of the period of ignorance that trampled the basic Islamic-principles, wouldn't have occurred.

13. On one occasion, Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** declared Abd al-Rahman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** as a monotheist whose faith was heavier then the faith of half the believers! On another occasion, he called him the Pharaoh of the community. The reality is that Abd al-Rahman was a famous capitalist and hoarder who left a significant fortune after his death. He left one thousand cows, three thousands sheep, and one hundred horses, and irrigated the region of al-Jurf of Medina with twenty irrigating cows. He had four wives, and at the time of his death, each of them inherited eighty thousands Dinars as inheritance, and this amount was equivalent to one fourth of one eighth of his wealth. When he divorced one of his wives, during his sickness, her inheritance was arbitrated at a sum of eighty three thousands Dinars.

14. Abd al-Rahman carried out the selection of caliph through trickery. He

(1) *Tarikh al-Yaʿqubi* 2/112; Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah*, 1/24.

proposed to Imam Ali (ʿa) to rule in accordance with the Book of God, the Prophet's traditions and the traditions of Abu-Bakr and ʿ Umar. The traditions of these two should not have been considered if they opposed the first two, but they did and he was thoroughly aware that Ali (ʿa) would refuse to accept his last condition. Therefore, when he refused, Abd al-Rahman proposed the matter to his wife's brother, Uthman, who accepted it immediately.

15. Government for Imam Ali (ʿa) was only a means and not the aim, while for his opponent, it was the aim and not the means. Had Imam Ali (ʿa) thought of the caliphate as Uthman did, he could have accepted the condition of Abd al-Rahman apparently, but avoided it in practice later on. But Imam Ali (ʿa) didn't and couldn't do such thing. He never demanded his right through falsehood.

16. Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was sure about the conspiracy of the second caliph and the intentions of the candidates. He said to his uncle al-Abbas, "This time, too, I am going to be deprived of the caliphate." Abdullah Ibn Abbas, when he learned about the members of the council, said, "Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** wants to make Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** the caliph."

17. Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ordered Muhammad ibn Maslamah that if the minority didn't obey the majority, they should be executed immediately; if the group having equal votes didn't agree with Abd al-Rahman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s group, it should be executed; if all of the candidates didn't reach an agreement within three days, all of them should be executed by the sword. "Bravo! What freedom!" Where in the world is a minority killed if it stands in front of the majority? The affairs of Islamic society for ten whole years were taken over by such a hard-hearted person that he neither had the correct methods nor the sentiments of human kindness and, therefore, people said about him, "The lash of Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was more horrifying than the swords of al-Hajjaj."

The selection of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** provided so much power that Abu-Sufyan,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who belonged to the tribe of Uthman, went to Mount Uhud and kicked the grave of Hamzah, **Error! Bookmark not defined.**the exalted chief of Islam, and said, "Arise and see that whatever we fought for ultimately has fallen in

our hands."[1]

In one of the earliest days of caliphate, Abu-Sufyan, **Error! Bookmark not defined.**when all their family members were gathered in Uthman's house, looked towards those who were present and said, "Rotate caliphate from one hand to hand, select your employees from the Umayyah tribe**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, because we have no other aim but to rule; there is neither paradise nor hell"[2]

(1) *Nakhsh-e-Wa'az der Islam*, page 151.

(2) Ibn Abd al-Barr, *Al-Isti'ab* 2/290.

EMINENCE OF THE HOLY PROPHET'S FAMILY SHOWN BY IMAM ALIERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

Twenty-five years of Imam Ali's life after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** were filled with extremely sensitive issues and profound instructions. They were:

1. Imam Ali's stance on all issues and the manner in which he behaved with the caliphs;

2. His teaching of divine commands and Islamic laws; and

3. His social involvement and consistent guidance of the masses.

The cooperation of Ali (ʿa) with the caliphs for the expansion and development of Islam wasn't because he regarded them as the axis of truth or real leaders; rather, he regarded the family of the Prophet (s) as exalted teachers of truth and real leaders to the extent that he proclaimed it publicly, "Nobody of this community can be compared to the family of the Holy Prophet (s) and whoever has benefited from their blessing isn't equal to them."

In another speech, he has pointed out their level of knowledge and faith and said, "The Holy Prophet's descendants are the guardians of his secret mysteries; devotees of his commands, treasurers of his knowledge and keepers of his books. They are like mountains that protect Islamic lands from shaking. They are responsible for maintaining the divine position and esteem of the Holy Prophet (s)."(1)

At another place, he**Error! Bookmark not defined.** mentions them as *the foundations of religion and certainty*, and adds that *it is by resorting to their sayings and following their traditions that exaggerators can be prevented from crossing the limits and those who are left behind, join the caravan.*(2)

At yet another place, he said, "Observe the progeny of the Prophet (s) and follow their path so that you do not deviate from the path of truth and be saved from the path of misguidance. If they stop at a point, you should also stop and if they start moving, you should also move. Never move ahead of

(1) *Nahj al-Balaghah*, Sermon 2.

(2) *Ibid*

them or you will be misguided and never remain behind them to be annihilated."[1]

Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** considers acquaintance and identification with the Prophet's progeny [the Ahl al-Bayt**Error! Bookmark not defined.**] as leading to identification with God and His prophet (s): "Whoever dies being acquainted with right of God Almighty, the right of His Prophet (s) and with the Prophet's progeny, leaves this world as a martyr."

This statement illuminates the context of a tradition that has been narrated most often: "Whoever dies without identifying the Imam of his time has died the death of ignorance."**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

The Imam (ʿa) has pointed out the continuation of God's providence during each period of time and said, "An example of the Prophet's progeny (ʿa) is like the stars of heaven, if one of them sets, another one of them rises."

He has said, "May my father and mother be sacrificed for them whose names are famous in the heaven yet unknown to some upon earth."[2]

The following words of the Imam (ʿa) are about the followers of truth, and their perfect manifestation is the Prophet's progeny (ʿa): "They have identified the principles and branches of religion with perfect reason and action, not by hearing; because narrators of knowledge are plenty but its doers are very few."[3]

Imam (ʿa) has introduced them as successors of prophets, leaders of the community, and possessors of exalted divine positions (except prophethood): "They possess distinctions of vicegerency and Imamate; the Prophet (s) has testified about them and they are successors of the prophets."[4]**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Imam Ali's intellectual and judicial authority of the caliphs

Imam Ali's silence for a prolonged period of twenty-five years wasn't a renunciation from the affairs of government. Although political leadership was usurped by others and appointments and dismissal of persons and possession of Islamic wealth were also under their control, Imam Ali (ʿa)

(1) *Ibid*, Sermon 3.

(2) *Ibid*. Sermon 182.

(3) *Ibid*, Sermon 234.

(4) *Ibid*, Sermon 2.

was the only supreme intellectual authority and unique educational teacher that humbled all classes of Islamic society.

One of the most outstanding services of Imam Ali (ʿa) during this period was to lead the newly established institution of judiciary. Whenever this institution was encountered with a problem, it immediately passed it on to Imam Ali (ʿa) and requested its solution. Occasionally, Imam Ali (ʿa), without being consulted by any one, guided the caliph of the time who was also the holder of the highest judicial position and informed him about his mistake while issuing a verdict and issued such firm and outstanding judgments that created a wave of astonishment in the minds of the Holy Prophet's companions.

He didn't recognize their caliphate officially, but whenever the basis of Islamic interests were threatened, he never denied any sort of service and help and with a cheerful face welcomed difficulties. The Imam's dignity was too high and his soul too exalted to think that since the caliphate had been usurped, he should neglect the affairs of the government and not solve any problem until disorder and grievances engulf society and result in the fall of the caliphate.

No, Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was the son of Islam, its sapling that was planted by the Holy Prophet, raised in his bosom, and he had sacrificed his blood in the process. Faith didn't allow him to keep his lips tightly sealed and not offer any sort of necessary guidance.

Acquainting the community with the principles of Islam, ensuring its steadfastness while its borders expanded, and safeguarding Islamic magnificence in the eyes of Jews and Christians who were coming to Medina group by group to inquire about the newly established religious code, were amongst the basic aims of Imam Ali (ʿa). The caliphate didn't create any obstruction in this path and occasionally, even begged him to fulfill the need. He never refused offering guidance, rather, welcomed it.

He (ʿa) has explained this reality and the reason for cooperating with the caliphs in a letter that he sent to the people of Egypt through Malik al-Ashtar: "In the beginning, I kept myself away from the caliphs (and left them upon their own) until I witnessed that groups were withdrawing from Islam and inviting people to destroy Muhammad's religion. I became scared that I if didn't act quickly and support Islam, I would see schism and destruction in the dominion of Islam, and that tragedy was greater for me than being distanced from government for a few days that would disappear

like a mirage."[1]

Imam Ali by the Holy Prophet

T**Error! Bookmark not defined.**he caliphs and their supporters approached Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** for solutions to their problems because they had learned from the Holy Prophet (s) about Imam Ali's knowledge and judicial wisdom. The following sentence is an example:

"The most wise and knowledgeable about Islamic traditions and judicial laws in my community is Ali ibn Abi-Talib."**Error! Bookmark not defined.**[2]

The Holy Prophet (s),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** while introducing some individuals like Zayd ibn Thabit and Ubay ibn Kaʿb, said about Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, "The most intelligent method of judgment is Ali's, among you."

These words were still ringing in the ears of his companions when he further added, "I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gateway, whoever wants to enter the city should enter through its gate."**Error! Bookmark not defined.**[3]

They had seen when the Yemenis requested the Holy Prophet (s), saying, "Dispatch a person towards us who can teach us religion and the Islamic traditions and can judge in accordance with the Book of God." The Holy Prophet (s) looked towards Imam Ali (ʿa) and said, "O Ali! Move towards Yemen, teach them the religion of God, make them acquainted with Islamic traditions and judge them in accordance with the Book of God." Then he put his hand upon Ali's chest and said, "Go and God will guide your heart towards the truth and make your tongue immune from mistake and negligence."

The prayer of Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** for Ali (ʿa) was granted in such a manner that the Imam (ʿa) said, "Since that time, I have never had the slightest doubt or encountered the least conflict regarding any problem."

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(1) *Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Letter 62.

(2) Al-Kanji, *Kifayat al-Talib*, page 190.

(3) Hamid Husain Hindi has assigned one of his journals: *Aqbat al-Anwar* for the collection of authentic documents about this tradition.

Judgments of Imam Ali during the Prophet's life

During the life of the Holy Prophet (s),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** Imam Ali (ʿa) was the absolute judicial authority upon people in Yemen and also Medina. The Holy Prophet (s) praised his judgments and thus introduced him as the supreme judicial authority after him for the people.

Here are two examples of Imam Ali's judgments that were testified by the Holy Prophet (s):

1. While Ali (ʿa) was living in Yemen as the representative of the Holy Prophet (s),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** the following incident took place: A group, after hunting a lion, trapped it in a deep trench and took positions around it in bunkers. Suddenly, the foot of one of them slipped and in order to save himself, he caught hold of another one, who caught the hand of a third one, and the third one pulled the hand of a fourth one. Ultimately, all of them fell in the trench and were attacked by the lion, and due to severe injuries, all of them were killed. Amongst their inheritors, a dispute arose. Imam Ali (ʿa),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** learning about it, said that he would judge between them. If they had reservations about his judgment, they were free to take their case to the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. He said, "The group that excavated this trench must pay the blood money to the guardians of the four people in the following manner: To the guardian of the first person one fourth of the blood money, to the guardian of the second person one third of blood money, to the guardian of the third person half of it and to the guardian of fourth person complete blood money."

When questioned on what basis the guardian of the first person should be paid one fourth of the blood money, he replied, "This is because he dragged three people after him who were killed, and the second person dragged two other people after him, the third person one person after him, whereas the fourth one did not cause the death of anyone after him."(1)

However, the relatives of the killed persons didn't agree with Imam Ali's judgment and went to Medina and related the incident to the Holy Prophet (s). He replied, "My judgment is the same as Ali's judgment."(2)

Shiah and Sunni narrators have narrated Imam Ali's judgment in this case.

(1) Muhibb al-Din al-Tabari, *Dhakha'ir al-Uqba*, page 84; al-Muttaqi al-Hind, *Kanz al-Ummal* 2/393; al-Hurr al-Amili, *Wasa'il al-Shiʿah* 19/175.

(2) Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, *Kanz al-ʿUmmal* 2/393; al-Hurr al-Amili, *Wasa'il al-Shiʿah* 19/175.

But Shiah narrators have narrated this incident in another manner. In accordance with this narration, Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** said, "The first person was directly hit by the lion and his blood money isn't due upon any one. So, the guardians of the first person must pay one third of the blood money to the guardians of the second; the guardians of the second person pay half the blood money to the guardians of the third person; and the guardians of the third person should pay the total blood money to the guardians of the fourth person."

Shiah narrators don't consider the first narration as correct, because an untruthful person exists in the chain of its narration, but regard the second narration as absolutely correct. The important point in this judgment is that the Imam (ʿa) distributed the blood money of the fourth person equally among the guardians of the three previous persons. In this a manner, the guardians of first person had to pay the guardians of the second person one-third of the blood money and the guardians of the second person two-thirds (one third of their own right should be added to whatever they had obtained from the first person) to the guardians of third person. The guardians of the third had to pay the total blood money to the guardians of the fourth person. In this manner the blood money of the fourth person was equally distributed among the previous three persons.

2. The Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and a group of Muslims were sitting in the Mosque when two persons entered and mentioned a grievance. The cow of one person had killed another person's animal with its horn. Does the owner of the cow responsible for the payment of the cost of the killed animal? One of Muslims took precedence in replying and said, "An animal isn't responsible for payment of money to anyone." According to a quotation from al-Kulayni in *al-Kafi*, the Holy Prophet (s) asked Umar and Abu-Bakr to arbitrate in this matter and finish the dispute. Both of them replied, "An animal has killed another animal and there is no obligation upon an animal." Then the Holy Prophet (s) asked Ali (ʿa) to arbitrate in that matter. Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** through a method of overall judicial law that is even practiced in legal societies today solved the problem and said, "The loss should be compensated by some one who is guilty of not performing his duty with respect to his animal. If the owner of the animal had tried to keep his animal in a safe corner but not performed his duty properly and let the cow be free, in that case, the owner of the cow is guilty and should pay compensation for the animal killed; but if the case is the opposite, he is not responsible for payment of the loss."

Hearing this arbitration based on a judicial law, the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** raised his hands towards heaven and said: “Thank God that He has blessed my family with some one whose arbitration is like the arbitration of prophets.”

Many more outstanding, astonishing judgments during the life of the Holy Prophet (s) have been recorded in historical and traditional texts.

IMAM ALI AND THE POLITICAL PROBLEMS OF THE FIRST CALIPH

History has recorded that the first caliph resorted to Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** for help in political, ideological, and theological issues, commentary of the Holy Quran and commandments of Islam, and utilized his guidance continuously. Here are some examples of his assistance.

Battle with Romans

One of the most die-hard enemies of the young Islamic government was the Roman Empire, which continuously threatened the center of the Islamic government from the north and, therefore, the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was never negligent of its danger until the last moments of his life. He dispatched a group in command of Jaʿfar ibn Abi-Talib towards the Syrian coast in 7 A.H., but the Islamic army, after losing three commanders, returned without any result. In order to compensate for this defeat, the Holy Prophet (s) accompanied by a large army left towards Tabuk, but returned to Medina without encountering the enemy. This journey had some outstanding results that have been recorded in history. Nevertheless, the danger of a second attack always kept him anxious about this possibility and, in the last moment of life, while ailed in bed, he arranged soldiers from the Helpers and the Emigrants to be dispatched towards the Syrian coast. But this army didn't leave Medina and Holy Prophet (s) died while it was stationed in a military camp only a few kilometers from Medina.

After the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** when Abu-Bakr took control of the caliphate, he was completely double-minded about implementing the Prophet's command to fight the Romans. He consulted a group of companions and their opinion didn't satisfy him. Ultimately, he consulted Imam Ali (ʿa),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who motivated him to execute the Prophet's command and added that if he fought the Romans, he would be victorious. After listening to the Imam's words, the caliph became cheerful and said, "You have given me a good omen and prophesied goodness."[1]

(1) *Tarikh al-Yaʿqubi* 2/123.

Debate with the great Jewish intellectuals

After the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** groups of Christians and Jews, mainly intellectuals, headed towards the Islamic capital and raised some questions to weaken the morale of the Muslims. An intellectual Jewish group entered Medina and said to the first caliph, "It is written in the Torah that successors of Prophets are the most brilliant ones in the community. Right now, you are the caliph, therefore, please tell us where God is now. Is He present on earth or in heaven?"

Abu-Bakr replied that God was in heaven and the Jewish intellectual retorted, "In this case, the earth should be without God!"

It was at this sensitive in juncture that Imam Ali ('a) rushed to Islam's help and saved its prestige. He said, "Places have been created by God; He is above them to be contained within them. He is everywhere, but never in contact or in the vicinity of any existence. He dominates everything and nothing is outside the domain of His kingdom."(1)

The Jew uncontrollably admitted the truth of Imam Ali's words and admitted that he deserved the position of caliph.

Imam Ali ('a) used the belief in monotheism that there was nothing except God's existence and after that whatever there was, was His creation. If God had a place, it would have to exist with His existence from the very beginning, whereas there is nothing accompanying His existence.

One of the Attributes of God is that He is an Infinite Existence Whose prerequisite is to be everywhere and have dominance over everything. He isn't a body, neither has a surface contact, nor exists in its vicinity. This short meaningful context demonstrates the certain and profound knowledge of Imam Ali ('a).

This isn't the only case; rather, during the period of the two caliphs and during his own period, he talked to them repeatedly. Abu-Na'im has quoted details of Imam Ali's discussion with a group of forty Jewish intellectuals that is beyond the boundaries of this book. The style of Imam's Ali ('a) debate depended upon the magnitude of their knowledge and awareness. Occasionally, he rested upon the most accurate reasons, while at other times, he clarified the matter by presenting analogies and examples.

(1) Al-Mufid, *Kitab al-Irshad*, page 107.

Convincing reply to a Christian scholar

Salman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** has said: After the Holy Prophet (s),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** a group of Christians under the leadership of a Bishop entered Medina and asked some questions in the presence of the caliph, who sent them to Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. One of their questions was: Where is God? Imam Ali (ʿa) ignited some fire and then asked them, "Where is the front of this fire?"

The Christian replied, "All its sides would be regarded as its front and fire doesn't have a front or back."

Imam Ali (ʿa) replied, "If there is no special front for fire which is a creation of God; should its Creator have a front and back? East and west belong to Him and wherever you look around, you will see God, and nothing is hidden and covered from Him."(1)

Imam Ali (ʿa) helped answer simple questions about some words of the Holy Quran, when the caliph was helpless and desperately resorted to his help. Therefore, when a person asked Abu-Bakr the meaning of the word *abb* mentioned in Quranic verse, he with complete surprise said: "Where will I go, if I comment on God's words without knowledge?" When news reached Imam Ali (ʿa), he replied, "What is meant by this word is grasses and fodder."(2)

Why the word *abb* in Arabic is used to meaning grass and fodder can be testified by the verse itself, because "*fruits and grasses,"* are followed immediately by the sentence: "*Provision for you and your cattle*;" i.e. these two are for your enjoyment as well as for your animals. What could be enjoyment for human beings is *fruits* and what could be a source of enjoyment for animals is *grasses and fodder* of the plain.

Judgment of Imam Ali for a drunken person

The government agents brought a person who was drunk to issue the penalty for drinking. He claimed that he wasn't aware about the prohibition of alcoholic drinks and had lived among a group who, until the present, considered alcohol-drinking as permissible. The caliph immediately dispatched someone to Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and asked for the solution to the problem. The Imam said, "Two trusted persons should take the hand of this drunken person and take him

(1) *Qada' al-Imam Ali*, page 96.

(2) al-Suyuti, *al-Durr al-Manthur* 6/317; al-Mufid, *Kitab al-Irshad*, page 106.

around gatherings of the Helpers and the Emigrants and ask them if they had recited the Quranic verse of prohibition of alcohol for this man or not. If they testify that they have recited it for him, the penalty of punishment for drinking should be executed upon him, and if their answer is no, he should be asked to repent and never touch alcohol with his lips in future and allowed to go."

The caliph followed Imam Ali's verdict and that man was freed.

Imam Ali (ʿa) never left the responsibility of defending Islam and the sacred boundaries of religion. It has been recorded in books of Islamic history that the leader of Jews asked Abu-Bakr for the Holy Quran's verdicts about the following questions:

1. What are the roots of life and a live existence?

2. Who is the inanimate that, in a manner, has uttered words?

3. What is that thing which is continuously in a state of becoming large or small?

When news reached the Imam (ʿa), he replied, "According to the Holy Quran, the root of life is water.(1) The inanimate object that has spoken is the earth and sky who accepted God's orders.(2) The thing which is continuously in a state of becoming large or small is night and day."(3)

It is obvious that these are the words of Imam Ali (ʿa), because normally, in order to prove his words, he always quoted verses from the Holy Quran that resulted in confirming their truth.

(1) *"We made every living thing from water.* [21:30]*"*

(2) *"Then turned He towards heaven when it was smoke and said unto it and unto the earth: Come both of you willingly or loth. They said: We come obedient.* [41:11]*"*

(3) *"Allah causeth the night to pass into the day and causeth the day to pass into night.* [31:29]*"*

POLITICAL GUIDANCE OF IMAM ALI FOR THE SECOND CALIPH

Expansion of Islam and security of Muslim lands were the objectives of Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. During the period of the second caliph, too, he acted as his chief advisor, and was able to untie knots of complicated political, social, and educational problems. Here are a few instances where Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** utilized Imam Ali's guidance in political affairs:

Advice on conquering Persia

In the year 14 A.H., intense fighting took place between Islamic and Persian armies in the land of al-Qadisiyyah that ultimately resulted in the victory of Muslims, and Rustam Farrakhzadeh, Commander of the Persian army, and a large number of his troops were killed. Iraq came under the political and military influence of Muslims. Al-Mada'in, the capital of the Sasanian kings, was occupied by Muslims. Chiefs of the Persian army retreated to their country. Advisors and military individuals of Persia were scared that the Islamic army would eventually be victorious over the entire country. In order to defend themselves against this dangerous attack, Yazdgard III, Emperor of Persia, organized an army consisting of one hundred and fifty thousand soldiers under the command of Fayruzan in order to defend themselves against any sort of attack, and, in case of suitable conditions, they could attack the Muslim army themselves.

Saʿd ibn Abi-Waqqas,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** commander of the Islamic army (or according to other quotation, Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Yasir), who was the governor of Kufa,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** wrote a letter to Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** informing him about the situation. He said that the army of Kufa was ready to attack and wanted to fight to scare the enemy before the enemy attacked. The caliph went to the mosque and collected the Companions and informed them about his decision of leaving Medina and be stationed in the area between Basra and Kufa, in order to take over control of command in his own hand. At that moment, Talhah stood up and encouraged the caliph to leave Medina. Uthman not only encouraged the caliph to leave Medina but also added that he should write to the armies of Syria and Yemen that all of them should leave that region and join them so that they could encounter the enemy with a huge army.

At this moment, Imam Ali (ʿa) rose, criticized both suggestions and said, "The lands recently taken over by Muslims with a lot of pains shouldn't be left without an Islamic army. If you call the Muslims of Yemen and Syria from those regions, it is quite possible that the Ethiopian army will occupy Yemen and the Roman army will occupy Syria; leaving women and children living in Yemen and Syria to be tortured. If you leave Medina, the surrounding Arabs will utilize this opportunity to start rebelling, whose losses will be far greater than the venture you are going for. The leader of a country is a rosary that keeps all beads connected with each other, if the rosary is broken all the beads shall be scattered. If your concern is the small size of the army, Muslims, being equipped with strong faith, are plenty. You should act like the axis of the flour-mill and let the flour-mill of war keep turning through the Islamic army. Your participation at the frontline of war would only encourage the daring of enemies. They would think that you are the only leader of Islam, and without you, Muslims don't have any other leader, and if they get rid of you in the battlefield, their problems will be solved and this thinking will increase their greed manifold for victory in the war."(1)

After hearing Imam Ali's words, ʿ Umar cancelled his plan of going to the war and said, "Ali's opinion is wise and I would like to follow it."

Advice during the Battle of Jerusalem

In the victory of Jerusalem, Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** resorted to Imam Ali's advice and followed it. After the victory of Damascus, one complete month had already passed and they intended to march towards Jerusalem. Commanders of the Muslim army were Abu-Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah and Mu'adh ibn Jabal. Mu'adh said to Abu-Ubaydah, "Write a letter to the caliph and ask him about advancing towards Jerusalem." Abu-Ubaydah did so and the caliph read the letter for the Muslims and asked for their opinion. Imam Ali (ʿa) encouraged Umar to write to the commander of the army to advance towards Jerusalem and after its victory continues moving forward until they enter the land of Caesar, and be assured that victory belonged to them, as the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** had already prophesied.

The caliph immediately requested ink and paper and wrote a letter to Abu-Ubaydah, encouraging him to advance towards Jerusalem and added that

(1) *Nahj al-Balaghah*, Sermon 144; *Tarikh al-Tabari* 4/237-8; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh* 3/3; Ibn Kathir, *Tarikh* 7/107; al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar* 9/501.

the Prophet's cousin had given him glad tidings that Jerusalem would be conquered by him.

Determination of the origin of Islamic history

Every noble nation has its history so that all incidents and episodes can be described upon its basis. For the nation of Jesus Christ (ʿa), the origin of history starts with his birth, and for the Arabs before Islam, the Year of the Elephant was considered as the origin of their history. Some nations have a national origin of history while others relate their incidents to an outstanding episode like the year of drought, year of war, year of epidemic and so on.

Until the third year of the caliphate of Umar,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** Muslims were lacking a historical origin to date letters and contracts of government offices according to that origin. Very often letters were written for military commanders containing only the name of the month in which the letter was written and lacking the year. This act, in addition to being a defect in the Islamic system, created problems for the receiver of letters because, very often, two letters with contradictory instructions reached the hands of military commanders or rulers of the time and because of distances and not being dated properly, they did not know which letter had been written earlier.

To determine the origin of Islamic history, ʿ Umar gathered the Companions of the Holy Prophet (s) and each of them gave his opinion. Some of them suggested the birth of the Holy Prophet (s), while others proposed the beginning of his prophethood. Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** suggested that the day the Holy Prophet (s) left the land of polytheism and moved his feet towards the land of Islam should be appointed as the origin of history. Among various proposals, Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** liked Imam Ali's suggestion and officially declared the migration of the Holy Prophet (s) as the beginning of Islamic history and accordingly, from that day, all letters and certificates in government offices were dated with the year of migration.

Imam Ali,*Error! Bookmark not defined.* ***the judicial authority during Umar****Error! Bookmark not defined.****'s reign***

With the spread of Islam to various nations and countries, Muslims encountered a series of newly developed issues whose commands weren't given in the Book of God and the traditions of the honorable Prophet (s). Verses were limited to commands and secondary issues, and traditions that

were in possession of the community didn't exceed more than four hundred, regarding mandatory and prohibited acts from the Holy Prophet (s). Therefore, Muslims were facing difficulties in resolving many issues about which clear instructions from the Holy Quran or the Prophet's traditions weren't available.

These issues led a group to think that they could use their own faculty of reason and opinion in solving those types of issues, and by utilizing incorrect criteria could determine the command of that particular issue. This group was named as Opinionists. Without having a certain absolute religious reason from the Book and Traditions, they assessed issues from the point of view of interest and by analogy, determined God's command about them, but Umar didn't favor those Opinionists and said about them, "They are enemies of the Prophet's traditions. They couldn't save them and started issuing their own decrees. They are misguided and misguiding others. Be aware that we are followers and don't start anything new ourselves; we are only followers and don't start our own innovations. We have held on to the Prophet's traditions and, therefore, are never going to be misguided."

Notwithstanding that, he acted according to his own opinion against clear explicit religious commands, and in some cases, because of not having a reason, he himself issued verdicts, nevertheless, in most cases, he consulted **Error! Bookmark not defined.**Imam Ali (ʿa). Umar utilized the knowledge of the Imam (ʿa) and the incantation of his tongue was, "Women are helpless to give birth to some one like Ali."

"O God! Don't allow me to face a problem where Ali isn't available."

Some examples are as follows:

1. A man came to Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and complained that his wife had delivered a child after only six months of marriage. The wife too, accepted this and added that before marriage, she never had any contact with any other man. The caliph ordered that the wife should be stoned to death for adultery. But the Imam (ʿa) prevented him from executing his orders and said that according to the Holy Quran, it is possible that a wife delivers a child after six months because, in the verse, the duration of pregnancy and breastfeeding has been limited to thirty months as follows: "*And the bearing of him and the weaning of him is thirty months*. [46:15]"

In another verse, the period of breast-feeding has been described as two years: "*And his weaning is in two years*. [31:14]"

"If two years are subtracted from thirty months, six months would remain for pregnancy."

Umar, after hearing the Imam's logic, said: "If Ali was not there, Umar would have been destroyed."(1)

2. In the judicial court of the second caliph, it was proved that five people had been involved in an unchastely act. The caliph issued the same judgment for all of them, but Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** didn't agree with his judgment and asked for further investigation to be conducted regarding their situations. If their situation proved to be different their punishment would also be different. After investigations Imam Ali (ʿa) said, "One of them should be executed, the second stoned to death, the third lashed one hundred times, the fourth lashed fifty times, and the fifth reprimanded."

After hearing Imam's verdict, the caliph put his fingers in his mouth with astonishment and asked its reason. Imam Ali (ʿa) replied, "The first one is an infidel under the protection of the Islamic state and an infidel's life is respected insofar as he respects the laws of the state protecting him, but when he tramples over these laws, his punishment is death. The second one is a married man and has committed adultery and its punishment in Islam is to be stoned to death. The third one is a bachelor who has sinned and his punishment is one hundred lashes. The fourth one is a slave and his punishment is half of the penalty of a free man, and the fifth one is insane."(2)

At this moment, ʿ Umar confessed, "I should never be in a gathering where the son of Abu-Talib isn't present."

3. A slave whose feet were tied with iron chains was walking. Two individuals, disagreeing about the weight of the iron chains, entered into a bet. Both said that if *his* assumption was incorrect, *his* wife shall be regarded as three times divorced! Both of them came to the slave's owner and asked him to open the chain so that it could be weighed. He replied that he had taken an oath not to open the chain until he pays charity equal to its weight. The issue was brought to ʿ Umar who said that since the slave's owner cannot open the chain, both these persons should be separated from their wives. They requested the caliph to take the issue before Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, who said, "Weighing of the chain is easy." Then he ordered them to bring a big tub

(1) Ibn Shahr'ashub, *al-Manaqib* 1/496; al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar* 40/332.

(2) Shaykh al-Tusi, *Tahdhib al-Ahkam* 10/50.

full of water and asked the slave to stand in its middle. Then he lowered the chain and tied a rope to it, and filled the tub with water. Then he pulled the chain with the rope till it completely came out of the tub. Then he ordered the tub to be filled with small broken pieces of iron so that the water in the tub could reach the previous level of water. Ultimately he ordered those broken pieces of iron to be weighed as that would be equal to the weight of the chain. In this manner, the obligations of all three people were made clear.

4. A woman in a desert was afflicted with severe thirst. Inevitably, she was forced to seek water from a shepherd and he offered to provide her water if she made herself available to him. Umar asked Imam Ali (ʿa) about the orders for that woman. Imam Ali (ʿa) replied that the woman was helpless in participating in this act, and for a helpless person, punishment isn't applicable.(1)

5. An insane woman was charged with an unchaste act. ʿ Umar condemned her, but Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** acquitted her quoting a tradition from the Holy Prophet (s):**Error! Bookmark not defined.** "The pen has been removed from one of them who is insane until he becomes well."(2)

6. A pregnant women admitted her sin and ʿ Umar ordered that she should be stoned in the same condition. Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** prevented execution of his orders by pointing out, "You have control upon her body but not upon the infant who is in her womb."(3)

7. Sometimes, the Imam (ʿa) applied principles of psychology to solve problems. One day, a woman absolved herself of her son, refused being his mother and claimed that she was still a virgin, while her son insisted that she was his mother. ʿ Umar ordered the youth to be whipped with lashes because of his claiming such a relationship with that woman. When news of this incident reached Imam Ali (ʿa), he took permission from the woman as well as her relatives that he would arrange to marry this woman to whomever he wished and they allowed Imam Ali (ʿa) to act as her attorney to recite the marital contract.

The Imam (ʿa) looked towards that young man and said, "I have married this woman to you and her dowry is 480 Dirhams." He put a sack

(1) *Sunan al-Bayhaqi* 8/236; al-Tabari, *Dhakha'ir al-Uqba*, page 81; Al-Amini, *al-Ghadir* 6/120.

(2) Al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak ala al-Sahihayn* 2/95; al-Amini, *al-Ghadir* 6/102.

(3) al-Tabari, *Dhakha'ir al-Uqba*, page 80; al-Amini, *al-Ghadir* 6/110.

containing the exact amount in front of the woman and told that young man, "Hold the hand of this woman and don't come near me until the effects of marriage can be seen upon your head and face." Hearing these words, the woman started crying, "I seek shelter in God. The result of this act is fire. I swear that he is my son." Then she explained the reason for her refusal.[1]

(1) Al-Irbili, *Kashf al-Ghummah* 1/33; al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar* 40/277.

ISSUES OF UTHMANERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED. **AND MUʿAWIYAH**ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

Imam Ali (ʿa) not only guided the caliphs, but also preserved religion by solving theological, political, and social problems of the Muslims for as long as he lived and whoever needed his help.

The Roman emperor asked Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** some questions demanding answers. Muʿawiyah, in order to safeguard his prestige as caliph of Muslims, dispatched an individual to Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to get answers from him. Here are some incidents showing Muʿawiyah and Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** extending their hands towards Imam Ali (ʿa) for help:

1. The rights of women in Islam are such that in case a husband divorces his wife but dies before the end of the detachment period, his wife, like other inheritors, inherits her share of inheritance from her deceased husband, because the marital bond is still valid.

During Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s caliphate, a man had two wives, one from the Helpers and another from the Banu-Hashim clan. It happened that the man divorced his wife from the Helpers and after a short while died. The divorced wife, observing the waiting period, went to ʿ Uthman and said, "My period of detachment has not been completed and I want my inheritance."

Uthman was confused and reported the issue to Imam Ali (ʿa), who replied, "If the women takes an oath that after the demise of her husband she didn't have her monthly period three times, she can inherit her husband's inheritance."

Uthman said to the Hashemite woman, 'This judgment is given by your cousin Ali, and I don't have any opinion about this matter."

She replied, "I am contented with Ali's judgment. She can take the oath and have her inheritance."[1]

This incident has been narrated by Sunni narrators in a different manner that isn't compatible with decrees issued by Shiite jurisprudents.

2. A pilgrim of Hajj or smaller pilgrimage isn't allowed to hunt animals

(1) Al-Nuri, *Mustadrak al-Wasa'il* 3/166.

living on the dry land as long as he is in the state of *ihram*. The Holy Quran describes it as follows: "*But to hunt upon land is forbidden upon you so long as you are on the pilgrimage.* [5:96]"

But if a person who is not performing Hajj hunts an animal, can a person who is wearing the pilgrim's garb eat its meat?

This is the issue in which ʿ Uthman obeyed Imam Ali's verdict. Earlier, he thought that he could eat the meat of an animal hunted by a person who was not a pilgrim. Incidentally, he himself was in the pilgrim's garb and wanted to join a group who had prepared their food in this manner, but when he encountered Imam Ali's objection, he changed his mind. Imam Ali (ʿa) quoted an incident from the Holy Prophet (s) that convinced him. The incident was that such food was brought for the Holy Prophet (s) when he was wearing the pilgrim's garb, but he refused to eat and justified, "We are wearing the pilgrim's garb. Give this food to those who aren't wearing this garb." When Imam (ʿa) narrated this incident, twelve people present over there also testified in his favor. Then, Imam Ali (ʿa) added, "The Holy Prophet (s) not only prevented us from eating such food but he also asked us not to eat the eggs of hunted birds."

3. According to Islam, an infidel will face divine punishment after death. During Uthman's caliphate, a man brought the skull of an infidel from his grave, took it to the caliph and said, "If, after death, an infidel is burnt in fire, this skull should be hot right now, while I touched it with my hands and I don't feel any heat!"

ʿ Uthman was speechless and dispatched someone to Imam Ali (ʿa), who **Error! Bookmark not defined.**created a scene to reply to him. He asked him to bring a piece of iron and stone used for igniting fire. He struck them against each other to produce a sparkling fire. Then he said, "By touching pieces of iron and stone, we can't feel the heat which both of them contain and which can only be felt under certain circumstances. What if the punishment of the infidel inside the grave is similar to this?"

The caliph was very happy and said, "Without Ali, Uthman would have been destroyed."

Islamic history has recorded seven occasions when Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** stretched his hands of need towards Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who saved himself from humiliation through his Imam's knowledge:

A man asked Muʿawiyah some questions, but **Error! Bookmark not**

defined. Muʿawiyah replied, “Ask Ali.” The questioner replied, “I don’t like to ask him; I would prefer to ask you.” He replied, “Why don’t you like to ask a person about whom the Prophet (s) has said, ‘the position of Ali to me is like the position of Aaron with Moses, except that after me there is no messenger’ and Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** solved his problems through him?[1]

When the news of Imam Ali’s martyrdom reached Muʿawiyah, he expressed, “Jurisprudence and knowledge have died.” Muʿawiyah’s brother said to him, “People of Damascus shouldn’t hear these words from you.”

Here is a list when Muʿawiyah sought Imam Ali’s help:

1. Punishment for one who had exhumed graves and stolen shrouds for a long time.

2. Punishment for one who had killed a person and claimed that he had killed him while he was busy in sexual intercourse with his wife.

3. Two persons differed about clothing. One of them produced two witnesses that those clothes belonged to him while the second claimed that he had bought them from a stranger.

4. Punishment for a man who married one daughter, but sent another one instead of her to the bridal chamber.

(1) Al-Tabari, *Dhakha'ir al-Uqba*, page 79.

IMAM ALI'S SOCIAL SERVICES

Helping the poor and orphans

The Quranic verse *"Those who spend their wealth by night and day, secretly and openly* [2:274]*"* has been revealed in praise of Imam Ali (ʿa) according to the unanimous opinion of commentators. This describes Imam Ali's situation during the life of Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and after. He helped the orphans, the poor and impoverished until the very last moment of his life. Islamic history has recorded many of these facts and their mention here would only prolong the discussion.

Freeing the slaves

Freeing slaves is a highly recommended act in Islam about which the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** said, "Whoever frees a believing slave, God Almighty frees each part of the person who frees the slave from the fire of hell, equal to each part of the body of the freed slave."

Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** purchased one thousand slaves with his hard earned income, but not from the Islamic treasury, and freed them. Imam al-Sadiq (ʿa) has testified to this fact.

Agriculture and tree plantation

Imam Ali's most favorite task during the life of the Prophet (s) and after was agriculture and tree plantation. He provided sustenance, plenty of services and help to the poor through this means. In addition to this, he developed many properties and made them charitable trusts. Imam al-Sadiq (ʿa) said about this, "Imam Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, used the shovel to excavate the earth and extract bounties hidden inside the heart of the earth."

Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** said, "There is no work more praiseworthy before God Almighty than agriculture."

Aqueducts for irrigation

In the extremely dry and burning hot land of Arabia, making aqueducts was considered an outstanding significant task. The Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** gave lands from the spoils of war to Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and he made aqueducts

from which water came out like a fountain. Imam Ali (ʿa) named it *Yanbuʿ*. Abundance of water resulted in the ease of the people that were living in its vicinity. He told them, "This aqueduct is an endowment for pilgrims of the House of God and any one who is passing from this place. No one is authorized to sell this water and my children shall never inherit it as an inheritance."(1)

At present, on the path between Medina and Mecca, there is a region by the name of *Bi'r Ali* where he excavated a well. Imam al-Sadiq (ʿa) said that Imam Ali (ʿa) also excavated wells on the path between Kufa and Mecca.

Construction of mosques

Building and repairing mosques is an indication of the firm belief in God and the Hereafter. Imam Ali built some mosques whose names have been recorded in Islamic history as: (1) Masjid al-Fath in Medina, (2) a mosque near the tomb of Hamzah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, (3) mosques at the fixed places *(miqat)****Error! Bookmark not defined.*** for Hajj pilgrimage, (4) a mosque in Kufa,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and (5) a mosque in Basra.

Endowments of housing and real estates

Names of several trusts and foundations of Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** have been recorded with details in history. Their annual income was forty thousand Dinars; all of it spent on impoverished, helpless, poor people. It is surprising that in spite of having such an enormous amount of wealth, the Commander of the Faithful (ʿa) was forced to sell his own sword to meet his living expenses. But it was not for nothing that the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** said, "After death, nothing reaches whoever passes away from this world except what he has left in advance from him: A righteous child who can repent for him, a good righteous tradition that he should have established among people, and righteous works whose effects remain after him."(2)

Documentation of Imam Ali's**Error! Bookmark not defined.** endowments, in addition to being a source of inspiration to build charitable trusts and foundations in Islam, is also a self-evident and firm proof of the humanitarian and social services of that noble person.

(1) Al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi* 7/543; al-Hurr al-Amili, *Wasa'il al-Shi'ah* 13/303.

(2) Ibn Tawus, *Kashf al-Mahajjah*, page 124; al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar* 41/43.

THE CALIPHATE OF IMAM ALI

REASONS FOR PEOPLE DESPARATELY SEEKING IMAM ALI'S CALIPHATE

The description of four parts of Imam Ali's life has been completed. We are now at the threshold of the fifth part of his blessed life; the part in which Imam Ali (ʿa) was selected for the position of caliphate and leadership. The most significant event was the desperate clamor of both the Helpers and the Emigrants for Imam Ali to lead them; a clamor that was unique. The selection of the earlier caliphs or the future ones cannot be compared to it, because nothing like it was ever seen in Islam.

After the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** the supporters of Imam Ali (ʿa) constituted a neglected minority, and except for a small righteous group of Emigrants and Helpers, no one else showed any inclination towards his caliphate. But after twenty five years had passed, the caliphate turned a page in such a manner that the general opinion of the people surged towards no one except Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. After Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s assassination, all the people gathered at Imam Ali's house with clamorous joy and insisted on offering their allegiance to him. The reason of this intense desire can be found in the bitter reign of the third caliph which eventually resulted in his own assassination and forced Iraqi and Egyptian revolutionaries not to return to their homes until they had unilaterally finalized the caliphate.

Roots of the uprising against Uthman*Error! Bookmark not defined.*

The real reason of the uprising was Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s special attachment and favoritism of the Umayyads. He was a branch of this tree and, in addition to trampling the Book and traditions, he took giant steps beyond the traditions of the previous two caliphs. He was notorious for his nepotism. When Umar appointed the members of the council, he commented about Uthman's favoritism.

The Umayyads were very well aware about Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s character, so, after his selection, they surrounded him and he distributed the Islamic government's top positions and ranks among them. Their daring reached such a limit that Abu-Sufyan**Error! Bookmark not defined.** went to the Graveyard of Uhud and kicked the grave of the Holy Prophet's respectable uncle Hamzah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, who was martyred in fighting against Abu-Sufyan, and said,

"Rise and see that whatever we fought for has fallen in our hands." During the prime days of ʿ Uthman, Abu-Sufyan said, "Right now the caliphate, after passing through the clans of Taym and Adi, has reached your hands. Be careful that it should never leave your clan and like a ball keep passing it from hand to hand so that the objective of the caliphate becomes nothing but government and ruling, and paradise and hell don't exist."(1)

As far as circulation of these words immeasurably injured the caliph's integrity, those who were present in this assembly tried their best to cover up this incident, but ultimately, truth revealed itself. It was required that the caliph should have reprimanded Abu-Sufyan**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and executed the divine penalty of punishment upon him for declaring such apostasy openly; but, unfortunately, he didn't. He treated him with honor and bestowed plenty of wealth upon him.

Causes of the uprising

Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was selected to the caliphate through a council whose members were appointed by Umar on the third of Muharram, 24 A.H. and on the eighteenth of Dhu'l-Hijjah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, 35 A.H., after eleven years of his reign, was killed by the revolutionaries of Egypt and Iraq, and some groups of Helpers and Emigrants. Authentic Islamic historians have explained the causes of Uthman's downfall and the revolution of the Muslim groups, whereas some historians out of respect have tried not to reveal the details of those incidents. The following factors can be regarded as the basis for the uprising by a group of angered Muslims:

1. Disregard and termination of Divine limits,
2. Distribution of the Islamic treasury among the Umayyads,
3. Foundation of the Umayyad authority and appointment of undeserving candidates for top Islamic posts.
4. Torturing and beating up a group of Companions who complained to the caliph and his courtiers.
5. Exile of a number of Companions who were considered by the caliph as an obstruction in implementing his thinking, wealth and planning.

(1) Ibn Abd al-Barr, *al-Istiʿab* 2/690.

Prime Factor; termination of the Divine code

1. ' Uthman appointed his step-brother, al-Walid ibn Utbah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** as the governor of Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. He was the type of person that the Holy Quran has reprimanded for two acts: corruption and disobedience. Yet, ' Uthman, despite his past performance as sinful, still awarded him the governorship of a large region of the Islamic government. For a corrupt person, it is unnecessary to respect the divine limits and maintain the dignity of higher positions. The rulers of that period, in addition to administering political affairs, were also responsible for leading the Friday and congregational prayers. This unworthy person, while severely drunk, led the Morning Prayer and offered four units instead of two and polluted the prayer niche of the mosque! The severity of his drunkenness was so great that people were able to remove his official ring easily without realizing it.

The people of Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** complained about this shameful deed to the caliph, but, unfortunately, he took no action against him; instead, he threatened them and asked, "Did you see my brother drinking alcohol?" They replied, "We didn't see him drinking but witnessed his drunkenness and removed his ring from his finger without him realizing."

The witnesses of incident who were dignified statesman of Islam informed Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and A'ishah about the episode. A'ishah said, "Uthman has terminated divine commandments and has threatened people." The Commander of the Faithful (ʿa) met with Uthman and reminded him of what the second caliph had said, "Don't impose the Umayyad children upon people. Dismiss Walid from the position of governorship and execute divine punishment upon him." Talhah and al-Zubayr too complained to the caliph about al-Walid's appointment and demanded that he should be lashed. Under general public pressure, the caliph was forced to dismiss him and appoint Saʿid ibn Abi'l-Aas, who also belonged to the criminal roots of the Umayyah **Error! Bookmark not defined.**, as the governor of Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. When he entered the city, he cleansed and washed the prayer niche, pulpit and governor's place, and sent Walid to Medina.

Walid's dismissal wasn't sufficient for calming down the general public affairs. The caliph had to execute the divine punishment on his brother, but**Error! Bookmark not defined.** because of intense liking for his step-brother, he put on a dignified robe upon his body and placed him in a

chamber so that Muslims could execute the divine punishment upon him. Individuals who were ready to execute the punishment of whipping him with lashes were threatened by Walid. Ultimately, Imam Ali (ʿa) took the lash in his hand and whipped him without paying any attentions to his threats.

2. One of the pillars of human social life is a just and legal government that can make the life and property of individuals immune from transgressions. More important was that the executor of law shouldn't differentiate friend from enemy, but the law should came out of the Book and social justice implemented.

The heavenly rulers executed divine laws without any fear and anguish and their human sentiments, bonds of kinship and material interests never influenced them. The Holy Prophet (s) was himself the most advanced in the execution of Islamic laws and a perfect manifestation of the verse: *"They do not fear the blame of any blamer. Such is the grace of God which He gives to whom He will.* [5:54]"

Fatimah al-Makhzumiyyah was a very famous woman whose stealing was proved before the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. A group who tried to prevent the execution of the punishment ultimately sent Usamah ibn Zayd to the Prophet (s) so that they could prevent the cutting of the hand of this well known woman. The Holy Prophet (s) was very sad and upset about these intercessions and said, "The misfortune of past nations was that if a person of exalted status committed theft, he was forgiven and his theft was considered as ignored, but if an unknown person committed a theft, they immediately executed God's command upon him. By God, if my own daughter, Fatimah, committed such an act, I would execute God's command upon her, because before God's law, Fatimah the daughter of Muhammad and Fatimah al-Makhzumiyyah are exactly equal."(1)

The Honorable Prophet (s) developed this thinking among the Muslim community, but after his demise, the gradual discrimination in the execution of justice entered into the body of Islamic society, especially during the period of the second caliph, racial discrimination and difference between racial groups was founded, but it wasn't sufficient to create a reason for an uprising and revolution. During the caliphate of Uthman, racial discrimination in the execution of laws reached its climax and

(1) Ibn Abd al-Barr, *al-Istiʿab* 4/347.

became such a crucial cause of grievance that angered a group to rebel against the caliph and the people gathered around it.

For example, the second caliph was killed by a Persian man. What was the reason for his murder? Is it not necessary to discuss why the caliph's murder was not investigated thoroughly by the institution of Islamic judiciary. His killer and motivators, according to Islamic law, should have been tried in a court of law, but it was certainly not correct that a caliph's son or his relative should undertake the trial of the killer or kill him, or kill the friends or relatives of the killer without any definite proof of their involvement in the caliph's murder to kill them without any trial!

Unfortunately, after the murder of the caliph, or during his agony of death, Ubaydullah, his son, killed two innocent people named Harmazan and Jufaynah, accusing them of being involved in his father's murder. If one of the companions wouldn't have taken the sword from his hand, he wanted to kill all the prisoners present in Medina.

The crime of Ubaydullah caused a huge uproar in Medina and all Helpers and Emigrants demanded Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to retaliate for the spilling of the blood of these two. More than any one else, Imam Ali (ʿa) insisted that he should punish Ubaydullah, and said to the caliph, "Retaliate upon Ubaydullah for killing innocent persons, because he has committed a great sin of killing innocent Muslims." But when he became disappointed of Uthman, he looked towards Ubaydullah and said, "If on a day I can place my hand upon you, I will kill you for the crime of killing Harmazan."(1)

Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s negligence in punishing Ubaydullah created an intense uproar and the shedding of these two persons' blood made people angry. The caliph sensed the danger, so he ordered Ubaydullah to quit Medina and go towards Kufa,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** bestowing upon him a large portion of land that was called the small Kufa of Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s son.

Unjustified excuses

These are some questions for the third caliph:

A. It is required from each Muslim ruler to permit the victim to get his right from the aggressor, whether the crime has been committed during his own rule or during the rule of another person. The right is permanent and

(1) Al-Buladhari, *Ansab al-Ashraf* 5/24.

steadfast, and with the passage of time and change of ruler, the demand of implementation of law remains valid and active. Why was Harmazan's blood right not given to his heirs?

B. If the ruler, during whose rule this incident has occurred, issues orders for investigation, he must be obeyed. When the second caliph was informed that his son Ubaydullah had killed Harmazan, he asked about reason. They replied, "It is rumored that Harmazan ordered Abu-Lu'lu'ah to kill you." He said, "Ask my son if he can produce a witness for this issue, for then, my blood would be equal to Harmazan's blood; otherwise, he should be tried for retaliation." Was it not required by the next caliph to execute the orders of the previous one? Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s son never had a witness that showed Harmazan was involved in his father's murder or had issued such an order to Fayruz.

C. It is true that the blood of Harmazan**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Abu-Lu'lu'ah's youngest daughter was spilled innocently, but if the victim doesn't have an inheritor, his guardian of blood money becomes the caliph. Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** utilized his position and freed and forgave the killer. This excuse doesn't seem to carry more weight than the previous excuse, because Harmazan wasn't like a mushroom just growing out from the earth and had no inheritor or relative. Historians have written that he was the ruler of Shuster for a long time. Such a person cannot be without an inheritor. Therefore, it was the caliph's duty to find out his inheritor and give him his right.

Let us assume that he was without an inheritor. In this case, his rights and property belonged to the Muslims, and if the Muslims had forgiven his murderer at that time, the caliph could have ignored his retaliation. But unfortunately, according to narrations, all Muslims, except a few, demanded Ubaydullah's retaliation. Imam Ali (ʿa) insisted on it and said to Uthman, "A corrupt person who has spilled the blood of an innocent Muslim should be punished." When the caliph made arrangements for Ubaydullah's freedom, Imam Ali (ʿa) complained and, "The caliph isn't authorized to be negligent about the rights that belong to Muslims." Apart from this, according to Sunni jurisprudence, the Imam and other guardians, like parents, are authorized to take revenge from the killer or accept blood money from him, but do not have the right to forgive.

D. According to the supporters of the third caliph, if Ubaydullah had been killed, the enemies of Muslims would have rejoiced that yesterday their caliph was killed, and today they killed his son. This excuse doesn't have

any value because punishing such an influential person would establish the grandeur of Muslims practically and prove that there was law and justice in their country, and law-breakers were given in the hands of law and their position and influence wouldn't be an obstruction in the execution of justice. Enemies would rejoice only when the ruler and his governors played games with divine law and preferred their own carnal desires and partisanships over divine laws.

E. It is said that Harmazan**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was party to the spilling of the caliph's blood, because Abd al-Rahman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Abi-Bakr had seen Abu-Lu'lu'ah, Harmazan and Jufaynah talking in whispering tones and when they dispersed a knife fell upon the ground containing two heads with its handle in the middle, and the caliph has been killed by such a knife. This excuse doesn't have any worth in the Islamic Court of Justice, because the witness is only one person; a gathering of three people who are related to each other couldn't be a proof of plotting the caliph's murder. Perhaps at that time Harmazan was advising Abu-Lu'lu'ah not to kill the caliph. Could the blood of people be spilled based upon imagination and guesswork? Are documents based upon assumptions acceptable in any court of justice?

Yes, Harmazan's killer lived free life for a long time. But Imam Ali (ʿa) said to him that if he got his hand upon him, he would execute the law of retaliation. When the Imam (ʿa) took over the leadership affairs in his hands, Ubaydullah ran away from Kufa to Damascus. Imam Ali (ʿa) said, "If you run away today, you will be trapped the next day." It wasn't very long after that, in the Battle of Siffin,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** he was killed either by Imam Ali (ʿa), Malik al-Ashtar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** or Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Yasir.

Second Factor; Distribution of the public treasury among the Umayyads*Error! Bookmark not defined.*

Muslims regarded the caliphate after the holy Prophet (s) as sacred and most important position. Difference of opinion whether the caliph should be appointed by God or selected by people didn't prevent them from paying homage to it. The Commander of the Faithful (ʿa), as a representative of people, said to the third caliph, "I swear to you in the name of God that you might be killed as the leader of this community, because it is said that a leader of this community will be killed, whose murder would result in the

beginning of widespread bloodshed until the Day of Judgment."[1]

In spite of the position that the caliph possessed among the Helpers, the Emigrants, and other Muslims, some significant groups of exalted personalities gathered in Medina and, with the help of the Emigrants and the Helpers, killed the third caliph and then returned to their own cities. The factors of uprising against Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** weren't limited to one or two. One of the factors was the disregard for divine laws of punishment discussed earlier. The other factor was the extravagant bestowing of huge amounts of wealth by the caliph to his family members without any account. Although history hasn't been able to record all of them accurately with details and even the famous historian al-Tabari has declared openly that because of the intolerance of people, he hadn't written down all the criticism and complaints recorded by the Muslims against the third caliph.

Fadak was bestowed to Marwan ibn al-Hakam until eventually Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Abd al-Aziz returned it to children of Lady Fatimah (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. Abu-Bakr claimed that it was a charity and like all other charities it should be preserved and its income spent on the interest of Muslims. Uthman's**Error! Bookmark not defined.** bestowing it to Marwan doesn't have any logical reason. A majority of historians have criticized the caliph and all of them have mentioned that one complaint brought against him was that he bestowed Fadak to Marwan, which was the charity of the Prophet of God (s).

He did not limit himself to this, but gave his cousin and son-in-law infinite amounts of huge sums without keeping any account. His love for the Umayyads knew no bounds. In 27 A.H., when the Islamic army brought a large amount of spoils of war accounted as two and a half million Dinars, one fifth of which belonged to six categories according to the Holy Quran [8:41]. Without any reason, he gave it to his son-in-law and aroused public opinion against himself to the extent that some of the poets composed verses against him:

Khums, which is especially reserved for the servant of God
He unjustly bestowed upon his son-in-law and practiced nepotism.

(1) *Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.**, sermon 159.

Islamic point of view about the public treasury

An act is a reflection of an ideology and belief. This act of the caliph indicated that he regarded himself as the sole private owner of the public treasury and this type of munificence, a service to his own family members. What is the Islamic point of view regarding the public treasury, spoils of wars, charities *(zakat)* and other types of Muslim public assets. The opinion of the Holy Prophet (s) and Imam Ali ('a) were as follows:

1. The Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** said about the spoils of war, "One fifth of it is the share of God and the remaining four fifths belongs to the army."

It is obvious that God's share is meant to be spent for God's desirable deeds.

2. When the Holy Prophet (s) dispatched Mu'adh ibn Jabal to Yemen, he ordered him to speak to people as follows: "God has made charity (zakat) mandatory upon you. It is taken from the wealthy ones and distributed among the impoverished and the poor."(1)

3. The Commander of the Faithful ('a) wrote to his governor in Mecca, "Whatever has been accumulated by you from the share of God, account for it properly and distribute it among people with families that are hungry. Be careful that it reaches the hands of the poor and needy individuals."

History has mentioned that two women, one Arab and the other former servant, came to the Commander of the Faithful ('a) and told him about their needs. The Imam ('a), in addition to forty dirhams each, provided them with some food material equally. The woman who was from the non-Arab race picked her stuff and left, but the Arab woman possessing thoughts of ignorance said to the Imam ('a), "Do you give me the same amount that has been given to a non-Arab woman?" The Imam ('a) replied, "In the Book of God, I don't find any superiority for children if Ishmael over the children of Isaac."(2)

If Uthman had been generous in distributing wealth from the public treasury to righteous people, it would have been an act of exalted, shining service of Islam, and he might not have been strongly criticized for his generosity towards his clan. But unfortunately, the people who were placed under the cover of his generosity didn't deserve any privileges in Islam.

(1) Abu-'Ubayd, *al-Amwal*, page 580.

(2) *Nahj al-Balaghah*, letter 67.

Marwan ibn al-Hakam was one of the staunchest enemies of the Commander of the Faithful (ʿa). He broke his allegiance with Imam Ali (ʿa) and was taken as prisoner in the Battle of the Camel, but was freed with the intercession of Imam al-Husayn (ʿa). The Imam's children said to him, "Marwan will make allegiance with more time." The Imam (ʿa) replied, "I don't need his allegiance. Didn't he make allegiance with me after Uthman's murder? His allegiance is like the allegiance of the Jews famous for trickery and breaking of contracts. If he makes allegiance with his own hand, he will break it with trickery and deceit. For him, there will be a short period of government, like a dog licking his nose. He is the father of four rulers and the Islamic community will witness a bloody day from him and his sons."(1)

Third factor; Establishment of the Umayyad government

The third factor of the uprising against Uthman was the tyrannical domination of the Umayyads upon sensitive Islamic centers; domination that didn't differentiate between old and young and completely burnt down everything dry and wet. In principle, the third caliph's strong attachment with the Umayyads reached its zenith. Regarding their demand for founding an Umayyad government, Islamic laws and regulations, interest and losses of Muslims, rationality, nothing was a criterion and standard for Uthman. Under the cover of his benevolence, a lot of wrongdoings were committed.

It must be pointed out that love for all other Muslims didn't exist at all. He was full of intense wrath towards the supporters of Abu-Dharr, Ammar, Abdullah ibn Masʿud and their likes. When he exiled Abu-Dharr al-Ghifari to al-Rabadhah, a land without water and fodder, and that old pious veteran of the battles of Islam died under terrible circumstances over there, his love for him was never heard. When Ammar was physically beaten and tortured by fists and legs of soldiers of the caliphate in front of him and he fainted, he wasn't affected in the least.

When Uthman appointed al-Walid ibn Utbah as the governor of Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Imam Ali, Talhah and al-Zubayr reminded him of Umar's wordings, "Didn't Umar warn you not to impose the clans of Abu-Maʿit and Banu-Umayyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** upon people?"

In reality, Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** followed the

(1) *Sunan al-Bayhaqi* 6/348.

guidance of Abu-Sufyan**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, who on the day of Uthman's appointment as caliph, entered his house and **Error! Bookmark not defined.**said, "Keep passing on the ball of caliphate from hand to hand." Abu-Musa al-Ashʿari**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was the governor of Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. He found it intolerable that a person other than an Umayyad should occupy such a position.

Therefore, Shibl ibn Khalid looked towards the confidential and private assembly where only Umayyads were present and said, "Why has a land of such vastness been handed over to Abu-Musa?" The caliph asked, "Whom do you have in mind?" Shibl pointed towards Amir ibn Abdullah who, on that day, wasn't more sixteen years old! It was due to such thinking that Saʿid ibn al-Aas, the uncle of the governor of Kufa,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** said from the pulpit, "Iraq has become a grazing round for Quraysh youths." The list of the top brass of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s government provides evidence of his words when he said, "If I possessed the keys of paradise in my hands, I would have given them to the Umayyads until the last person amongst them would enter paradise."

The changes made, only in the provinces of Kufa and Egypt, in the replacements of governors during Uthman's caliphate, are indicative of his political nepotism. The day he took power in his hand, he dismissed al-Maghirah ibn Shuʿbah from governorship and appointed Saʿd ibn Abi-Waqqas in his place. In this move, he apparently had correct foresight, because Saʿd was a great conqueror of Iraq and al-Maghirah a slanderer.

But Saʿd only played a temporary role, because he was dismissed from his job after only one year and Uthman appointed his step-bother, al-Walid ibn Utbah ibn Abi-Maʿit, as the governor of Kufa. In the year 27 A.H., he dismissed Amr ibn al-Aas from collecting taxes from Egypt and instead appointed his own foster brother Abdullah ibn Saʿd ibn Abi-Sarh. In the year 30 A.H., he dismissed Abu-Musa al-Ashʿari, the governor of Basra who was holding this position from the time of the second caliph, and instead appointed his maternal cousin Abdullah ibn Amir, who was still young. The abovementioned issues clearly indicate that Uthman endeavored to lay the foundation of an Umayyad government.

Fourth factor; Torture and oppression of the Holy Prophet's companions

Another factor of the uprising was the insults launched at the Holy Prophet's companions directly by Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** or by his appointed individuals. In this matter, it would be

sufficient to mention the following two examples:

Abdullah ibn Masʿud was an exalted companion of the Holy Prophet (s).**Error! Bookmark not defined.** He translated books to guide towards strong faith, steadfastness, and endurance, and propagated Islamic learning through the teachings of the Holy Quran. He was the first to recite the Holy Quran loudly near a gathering of the Qurayshite chiefs in the Holy Mosque in order to let the sound of God's words enter the ears of the blind-hearted people of Quraysh at the cost of his own life. At midday, when the chiefs were busy discussing relevant affairs in their assembly, Abdullah stood near the Standing Place of Abraham and with an eloquent and loud voice started reciting Surah al-Rahman (Quranic chapter no. 55).

The people of Quraysh asked one another, "What did Ibn Ummi-Abd say?" One of them replied, "He is reciting the Quran that has descended upon Muhammad." At that moment, all of them rose up and silenced his voice by beating and hitting him hard with a slap upon his face. Abdullah with his face injured returned to his friends. They told him that they were scared for him. Abdullah replied that God' enemies were never so degraded and abased in his sight as at that moment. He continued to talk to his friends and said that he was ready to repeat the same act the next day, but they did not agree.

This great companion spent his entire life, since his youth, inviting people to monotheism and teaching the Holy Quran to Muslims. He, along with other five ones, is included in the following Quranic verse: "*Repel not those who call upon their Lord in the morning and evening seeking his countenance. Thou art not accountable for them in aught, nor are they accountable to thee in aught, that thou shouldst repel them and be of the wrong-doers*. [6:52]"

His sole offence was not surrendering to the illegitimate demands of the governor of Kufa.**Error! Bookmark not defined.** Al-Walid ibn Utbah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** tried to take control over the public treasury whose keys were with Abdullah, who refused to turn over the keys to him. Al-Walid reported the matter to Uthman, who wrote a letter to Abdullah reprimanding him from not handing over the keys to al-Walid. Under pressure of the caliph, Abdullah threw away the keys towards the governor and said, "What strange days are these that Saʿd ibn Abi-Waqqas is being removed and replaced by al-Walid ibn Utbah. God's words are true and the guidance of the Holy Prophet (s) is most beautiful. Know that the worst innovations are those that haven't been ordered by Islam;

any thing that doesn't have religious roots is an innovation, every innovation is a deviation, and every deviator is certainly joining the fire."

Abdullah then took the path of Medina. People of Kufa surrounded him and promised their help and victory, but he replied, "The caliph has the right of obedience over me and I don't want to be the first to open a gate to sedition." When he entered Medina and went to the Mosque, he found the caliph speaking from the pulpit. When Uthman's eyes fell upon Abdullah, looking towards the people, he said, "O people! Right now a tiny smelling animal has entered in your assembly; the animal that walks upon his food and vomits upon it and thus makes it polluted." When Abdullah heard it, he replied, "I am not like that; I am the companion of the Holy Prophet (s), a veteran of the Battle of Badr, and one of those who paid homage to the Prophet (s) under that tree."

At that moment, A'ishah shouted from her chamber, "Uthman! How can you address the Prophet's companion in this manner?"

The confrontation started and in order to terminate the argument, Abdullah was ordered by the caliph to leave the mosque. Uthman's slave threw him upon the ground, raised and threw him upon the floor again thus breaking his teeth. At that moment, Imam Ali ('a) stood up to object and said, "Because of al-Walid's slander, do you torture the Holy Prophet's companion in such a manner?"

Ultimately, Imam Ali ('a) took Abdullah to his home but Uthman didn't allow him to leave Medina and he remained there until he died in 32 A.H.

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud fell ill; his friends went to visit him. One day, Uthman also visited him and the following discussion took place between them:

Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "What are you worried about?"

Abdullah: "Abut my sins."

Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "What do you want?"

Abdullah: "God's expanded blessings upon me."

Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "Should I order a physician at your bed side?"

Abdullah: "The real physician has made me sick."

Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "Should I order your previous pension to be paid to you?" (It was terminated since two years).

Abdullah: “The day I needed it, you denied it to me, now I am needless of it, so you want to pay?”

Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: “It would reach your children and family.”

Abdullah: “God is their provider.”

Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: “Please pray to God for my forgiveness.”

Abdullah: “I ask God to take my right from you.”

When Abdullah felt his death nearing, he told his guardians, Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** or al- al-Zubayr, that they shouldn’t allow Uthman to offer a prayer upon his dead body. They buried him at night. Since Uthman learned about the incident, he asked Ammar why he didn’t inform him about Abdullah’s death. He replied, “He willed that you shouldn’t offer a prayer upon his dead body.” After hearing these words between Ammar and Uthman, al- al-Zubayr recited the following poetic verses:

I could see you crying after my death.

When I was alive you didn’t pay my dues.

Such an oppressive behavior with a distinguished companion who was considered one of the great reciters of the Holy Quran and about whom Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** said, “He taught the Quran and traditions and this knowledge was sufficient for him.” When the caliphate supports such an unfair offence, it creates a widespread and profound anger among people. Repetition of such ghastly incidents gave rise to rebellious thoughts against the existing government and eventually what wasn’t supposed to occur happened.

It wasn’t only Abdullah ibn Masʿud who was disliked by the caliph; rather, Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** Yasir another exalted companion of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who couldn’t remain unblessed. The reason for his insult and torture was that the caliph allotted some of the public treasury’s ornaments, specifically, to his family members, and since this act raised public wrath, to defend himself he went upon the pulpit and said, “We can take from the public treasury whatever we like and we will rub the noses of the groups that oppose us on the ground.”

Ali (ʿa) replied to the caliph, “You won’t be allowed to do it.”

Ammar said, "I take God as witness that I will be the first one whose nose will be rubbed on the ground."

At that moment, Uthman lost his temper and shouted, "O you with a large belly! Do you dare to challenge me? Get him."

He was taken and beaten until he fainted. Ammar's friend took him to Ummu-Salamah's home, the wife of the Holy Prophet (s). When he became conscious, he said, "Thank God this isn't the first time that I have been tortured." A'ishah became aware of this incident, and she brought the shoes and clothing of the Holy Prophet (s) and said to Uthman, "Until now his clothing, shoes and hair haven't worn out, but you have obliterated his traditions." Uthman lost his temper with A'ishah's comment but didn't reply to her.

Ummu-Salamah treated Ammar. The individuals of the Banu-Makhzum tribe, with whom Ammar had an allegiance, started visiting him with hospitability. This act was criticized by the caliph. Ummu-Salamah sent a message to Uthman,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** "You are the one who has forced people to behave in this manner."

Ibn Qutaybah, in *al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah,* described the incident of Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** in a different manner that could be summarized as follows:

A group of the Prophet's supporters gathered and wrote a letter to the caliph informing him about his offences and weaknesses. The letter contained the following points:

1. The caliph, in some cases, opposed the traditions of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and the conduct of Abu-Bakr and Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

2. One-fifth of the spoils of war from Africa, in which God, the Prophet, his relatives, orphans and destitute have their rights, was totally bestowed upon Marwan ibn al-Hakam.

3. The caliph built seven homes in Medina for his wife Na'ilah and his daughters.

4. Marwan built places using money from the public treasury.

5. Important assignments were handed over to the Umayyads and Muslim affairs were handed over to inexperienced young men who never saw God's Prophet (s).

6. The governor of Kufa, al-Walid ibn Utbah, in a state of drunkenness, led the Muslims in the Morning Prayer as four units and, looking toward followers, said that if they were willing he could add another unit to it.

7. Uthman still did not execute the religious penal law of drinking alcohol upon him.

8. The caliph renounced the Helpers and the Emigrants and did not consult them.

9. The caliph, like kings, confiscated the lands around Medina.

10. The caliph bestowed plenty of wealth and allocated vast lands in the names of people who never saw the period of the Prophet (s) nor participated in the Islamic military campaigns, and, currently, were not defending the religion... etc.

This letter was written with the cooperation of ten persons, but because of the bad consequences they did not dare to sign the letter and gave it to Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to hand it over to Uthman. He came to Uthman's home, while he was surrounded by Marwan and a group of the Umayyads, and delivered it to Uthman. After reading the letter, the caliph realized who had written it but because of fear had not dared to come to his home. He looked at Ammar and said, "Your boldness has increased towards me." Marwan looked at the caliph and said, "This black slave has motivated people to be courageous against you; if you can kill him, you will take revenge from him as well as from others." Uthman said, "Beat him."

He was beaten until his hernia was ruptured and he fainted. They threw him out of the home. Ummu-Salamah, the Prophet's wife, learned about him and brought him to her own home. The clan of al-Maghirah, with whom Ammar had a common pact, was very upset with this incident. When the caliph came to the mosque to perform the Morning Prayer, Hisham ibn al-Walid followed him and said, "If Ammar passes away because of these injuries, I will kill one your kinsman tomorrow." Uthman Replied, "You don't have the courage for such a thing."

Fifth Factor; Exile of personalities

Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** exiled a group of companions and friends of the Holy Prophet (s),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** famous for their character and piety from Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to Damascus, from Damascus to Homs and from Medina to al-

Rabadhah. This chapter of Islamic history is the most painful amongst all of them, showing the existence of the darkest despotism in the caliphate. In this chapter, we will present some of the incidents, because everybody is well aware of the exile of Abu-Dharr to al-Rabadhah. The other exiles of Uthman's caliphate were:

Malik al-Ashtar Error! Bookmark not defined. **and his friends:** As mentioned earlier, the third caliph dismissed the obscene governor of Kufa, al-Walid ibn Utbah, and replaced him with Saʿid ibn al-Aas, the Umayyad, and ordered him to behave properly especially with the reciters of the Holy Quran and the distinguished personalities. Therefore, the newly appointed governor held meetings and discussions with Malik and his friends such as Zayd and Saʿsaʿah, children of Sawhan, and ultimately realized that Malik and his co-thinkers were opposed to the caliph's strategy. He confidentially exchanged letters with the caliph about this matter and reminded him that with the existence of Malik al-Ashtar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and his friends, who are reciters of the Holy Quran, he would be unable to perform his duties. In reply to the governor's letter, the caliph wrote to him to exile this group to Damascus.

Incidentally, he also wrote a letter directly to Malik al-Ashtar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** in which he said, "You have affairs hidden in your heart, which, if expressed openly, would make spilling of your blood legitimate, and I know that after reading this letter, you will not change your behavior until a hammered blow is inflicted upon you, and after that there is no life left in you. Whenever my letter reaches you, take the path to Damascus immediately." When the caliph's letter reached the governor of Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, he exiled a group of ten people, all of whom were righteous and distinguished people of Kufa. Among them, apart from Malik al-Ashtar, were Zayd and Saʿsaʿah the children of Sawhan, Kumyal ibn Ziyad al-Nakhaʿi, and al-Harith ibn Abdullah al-Hamdani**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

Ironically, the existence of this group of reciters of the Holy Quran, pious, courageous, valiant, eloquent speakers, made the scene so unbearable for Muʿawiyah, the governor of Syria, by arousing the general public opinion against the caliph and his representative in Syria. Therefore, Muʿawiyah wrote a letter to the caliph, "You have exiled a group to Syria who have polluted my cities and region and have aroused the masses in their own favor. I am absolutely certain that Syria will suffer a fate similar to Kufa and the safety of thinking and steadfastness of the Syrian people will turn into deviation and agitation."

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s letter scared the caliph who wrote that these people should be exiled to Homs, far away in Damascus. Those exiled from one province to another had not committed any crime except being truthful and criticizing the complete monopolization of caliphate. They desired the caliph to follow and practice the traditions of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. It would have been desirable for the caliph's dignity if, instead of accepting the report of the governor of Kufa, he should have dispatched trusted and righteous individuals to enquire about the reality, and in such a sensitive and important matter shouldn't have counted simply upon a report of his servant.

Who were exiled?

1. Malik al-Ashtar Error! Bookmark not defined.**:** A personality who had seen the Holy Prophet (s).**Error! Bookmark not defined.** None among writers has found any weakness in him and Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** described him in a unique manner, that until now no one has been able to describe him like that. When the news of Malik's death reached the Imam (ʿa), he was severely affected and said, "Do you know who Malik was? If he was a mountain, he was its highest peak; no bird would have dared to fly across it; and if he was a stone, a hard stone. Your death, O Malik, has made the world very sad and made another world very happy. For some one like Malik, mourners must shed tears. Does some one like Malik exist?"

2. Zayd ibn Sawhan: About him, it is sufficient to say that Ibn Abd al-Barr wrote, "He was a religious and distinguished elderly person of his clan. In the Battle of al-Qadisiyyah, he lost one hand and in the Battle of the Camel, in the company of Imam Ali (ʿa), he drank the sherbet of martyrdom."(1)

Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi wrote, "Zayd spent his nights worshipping God and his days fasting."(2)

3. Saʿsaʿah ibn Sawhan: Like his brother, he was an exalted personality, an eloquent speaker and religious person.

4. Amr ibn al-Hamq al-Khuzaʿi: He was a friend of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and had preserved a few of his

(1) Ibn Abd al-Barr, *al-Istʿab* 1/197.

(2) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Maʿarif*, page 176.

traditions. When he offered the Holy Prophet (s) with milk, that honorable one prayed for him and said, "O God! Bless him to fully utilize his youth."

5. **Kaʿb ibn Abd** wrote a letter to the third caliph and strongly complained about the obscene acts of the governor of Kufa and handed it over to Abu-Rabiʿah. When the letter reached the caliph, he immediately arrested Abu-Rabiʿah and asked him about all the co-thinkers of Kaʿb who had written the letter jointly (but without signatures), and handed it over to Abu-Rabiʿah, but he refused to tell their names. The caliph decided to punish the messenger, but Ali (ʿa) prevented him from doing so. Then, Uthman wrote a letter to Saʿid ibn al-Aas to punish Kaʿb with twenty lashes and exile him to the city of Rey.

6. Abd al-Rahman ibn Hanbal al-Jamhi: A companion of the Prophet (s), exiled from Kufa to Khaybar, his only crime being that he had criticized the caliph when he bestowed one-fifth of the spoils of war from Africa and composed the following poetry:

One fifth spoils of war from Africa given to Marwan

Preferred him upon others and practiced nepotism.

He lived in exile in Khaybar until Uthman was assassinated.

INCIDENT OF PROSECUTING AND KILLING UTHMANERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

Consequences of the five actions

The reaction to the abovementioned five actions caused a wide uproar of criticism from the Islamic country and put the caliph and his entire ruling hierarchy under a big question mark and accused all of them as having deviated from the straight path of Islam. The companions and Muslims surrounding him advised him to change his ways; otherwise, he would be dismissed from caliphate. The magnitude of opposition would become clear when we know the names of some of the opposition figures and their words:

Imam Ali (ʿa): He spoke regarding Uthman's actions before his murder and after. His words clearly reflect his view about Uthman's actions. The day he invited the children of the Emigrants to fight with the Syrians, he said, "O children of the Emigrants, rise against the heads of infidelity, the remaining polytheists and Satan's supporters; fight against Muʿawiyah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who has arisen to avenge the blood of one who carried the burden of many offences upon his shoulders (i.e. Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**). By God Who split the seed and created human beings, he will put the offences of others upon his shoulders until the Day of Judgment, while nothing will be reduced from the sins of others."(1)

Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** on the second day of his caliphate said, "Every land that Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** distributed to others and any sum of God's money that he gave to anyone should be returned to the public treasury."(2)

These words of Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** clearly explain his view of the caliph's actions. The most explicit amongst all of them is what the Imam (ʿa) said in his Sermon of Shaqshaqiyyah: "Consequently, the third caliph proudly took charge of the caliphate, as if it were a private grazing ground and, with bloated stomachs, he and the members of his clan started plundering Muslims' wealth in the same

(1) Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.** 2/194.

(2) *Nahj al-Balaghah*, sermon 14.

recklessly gluttonous manner which characterizes a camel when it devours harvest grass. However, this man met an ultimately death. The greed of this clan was the cause of his undoing."[1]

A'ishah**; the Holy Prophet's widow:** She criticized Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** a lot more than others. When Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Yasir was tortured and she learned about it, she brought the clothing and shoes of the Prophet (s) and said, "O People! The clothing and shoes of the Prophet (s) haven't worn out as yet, but you have forgotten his traditions."

When the Egyptians and a group of companions besieged Uthman's house, A'ishah left Medina with the aim of performing pilgrimage of the House of God. At this crucial juncture, Marwan ibn al-Hakam, Zayd ibn Thabit and Abd al-Rahman ibn Attab requested her to cancel her journey because her presence in Medina might save the caliph from a certain tragedy. A'ishah rejected their request for help and said, "Alas! I wish that in your feet as well as in you friend's feet, whom you are trying to help, a heavy peace of stone is tied and I had thrown both of you in the water or I could place him inside a bag and let him tolerate the pain of transportation and finally dump him in the water."[2]

A'ishah continuously criticized Uthman, but when she completed her Hajj pilgrimages and started her journey towards Medina, she learned about the caliph's murder and people's allegiance with Imam Ali ('a), she suddenly changed her position and said, "Alas! May the sky fall upon my head!" She requested, "Take me back to Mecca because by God, Uthman has been killed as oppressed and I will take his revenge!" The person who reported the news of Uthman's murder to her dared to say, "You are the first person to change your words. In the past, you kept saying that this *Na'thal* should be killed because he indulged in infidelity against God's religion, now, how do you say that he has been killed as oppressed?"

She replied, "They killed the caliph after he repented, and my second comment is better than my first one."

When she entered in Mecca, she went to the mosque and hung a curtain near the Hijr Ishmael position and lived under it. People surrounded her and she kept saying, "Uthman was killed as an innocent man, and I will take his revenge."

(1) *Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.**, sermon 3.

(2) Al-Buladhari, *Ansab al-Ashraf* 5/48.

Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf: He was another critic of Uthman's actions. Uthman's victory in the council of six persons was due to his ingenuity and trickery. When Uthman trampled his commitment of acting in accordance with the traditions of Holy Prophet (s) and method of Abu-Bakr and Umar **Error! Bookmark not defined.**, people complained to Abd al-Rahman and said, "All these innovations are because of you." He replied, "I never imagined that things would ultimately reach such a situation, it is compulsory for me not to speak to him." Since that day, Abd al-Rahman didn't talk to Uthman until the very last moment of his life. Even when Uthman paid him a courtesy visit during his sickness, he turned his face away from him and didn't talk to him.

Talhah and al-Zubayr: These two criticized Uthman a lot more than others. Our aim isn't to explain the fall of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s caliphate but to describe the background that led to the unanimous allegiance offered to Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

Siege of Uthman*Error! Bookmark not defined.****'s home***

"In the year 34 A.H., individuals from three cities; namely, Kufa, Basra and Egypt, who opposed the caliph's methods, gathered in the Holy Mosque and held discussions about Uthman's acts. All of them decided that as witnesses of the indecent acts of the caliph they should return to their own cities and discuss the matter with people who possess similar views about him and meet each other in Medina next year during the same period to take a decision about him.

In the next year, Malik al-Ashtar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** accompanied with a group of one thousand from Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Hukaym ibn Jabalah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** accompanied with a group of one hundred and fifty from Basra, and Kinanah ibn Bishr, Umar,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Budayl, accompanied with a group of four hundred or more from Egypt, entered Medina and a huge group of Helpers and Emigrants who were intensely opposed to the caliph joined them."(1)

"Since Abdullah ibn Masʿud, Ammar ibn Yasir and Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr were treated harshly by the caliph, the clans of Banu-Zuhrah backing Abdullah, Banu-Makhzum backing Ammar ibn Yasir, Taym backing Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr and others, in addition to these three groups,

(1) Al-Amini, *al-Ghadir* 9/168.

joined the rebels and besieged the caliph's home. The delegation from Egypt wrote a letter to the caliph with the following text: 'But after that, God never changes the conditions of any nation until they change it by themselves. For God, for God and again for God's sake, don't forget your reward in the Hereafter. We swear in the Name of God that we are angry for God and are happy for God. We aren't going to lay down our swords from our shoulders upon the ground until a proof of an immediate repentance for your ill deeds is submitted for us. These are our words and deeds.'"(1)

Commitment to the rebels

The siege made the caliph take them seriously and endeavor to break the siege. But unfortunately he wasn't aware of the intensity of the rebellion and couldn't differentiate between the well respected people of society and the notorious ones. He imagined that through the efforts of al-Maghirah ibn Shuʿbah and Amr ibn al-Aas, the dispute would be resolved. So, he sent these two persons outside his home to extinguish the fire of revolution. When the revolutionaries saw the unpopular faces of these two individuals, they began shouting slogans against them. They said to al-Maghirah, "Go back, O adulterer and lewd sinner," and to Amr, "O enemy of God, go back, you aren't a trustworthy person." At this sensitive moment, Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s son reminded the caliph of Imam Ali's position and said that he was the only one who could silence the uprising.

Then the caliph requested the honorable Imam to invite these people to the Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet (s),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** accepted this task on condition that the caliph would act according to whatever assurances Ali (ʿa) would offer on his behalf. Ali (ʿa) decided to assure on his behalf that the caliph would act in accordance with the Quran and the Prophet's tradition. The rebels too, due to Imam Ali (ʿa), accepted his assurances on behalf of the caliph. Then they entered with him and met Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and harshly admonished him. He too accepted their conditions and it was decided that he should give them a written commitment. Thus a commitment letter was written as follows: "This is the letter from the servant of God Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** towards those who criticized and complained against him. The caliph commits himself to act according to the Quran and the Prophet's tradition; take care of the destitute; give a general amnesty to

(1) Al-Masʿudi, *Muruj al-Dhahab* 3/88.

those who were living under fear; return exiles to their native places; halt the Islamic army in the land of the enemy; Ali ibn Abi-Talib is the well wisher of Islam and the believers, and it is required that Uthman should act according to this commitment."

A group like al-Zubayr, Talhah, Saʿd ibn Abi-Waqqas**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Abdullah ibn Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Zayd ibn Thabit, Suhayl ibn Hunayf, Abu-Ayyub and many others signed at the bottom of this page. The letter was written in 35 A.H., and every one of the groups received letters with the same content and began to return to their cities, and the siege of the caliph's home was lifted and its entrance and exits became completely free. After the scattering of the rebels, Imam Ali (ʿa) once again met the caliph and said to him, "It is required that you should speak to the people so that they could listen to your words and act as witnesses. Since the uproar of revolution engulfed the entire Islamic land, it is inevitable that delegations will enter Medina from other cities once more, and you will ask me to speak to them again." The caliph was completely aware of the truth and transparency of Ali (ʿa); therefore, he came out of his home and expressed regret for his indecent acts.

The Imam (ʿa) did a great service for the sake of unity and respect for the caliphate, and if, after that, Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** had acted under his guidance, no tragic incident would have occurred. But the caliph's lack of decision-making, farsightedness and dependence on advisors like Marwan ibn al-Hakam, committed an extremely indecent act.

Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** tried to present his meeting with the Egyptians in an entirely different light and said that some reports from Medina had reached Egypt and they had come here for enquires. Once they found out that the reports were baseless, they returned home. When such words came out of the caliph's mouth, a roar of protest was raised by the opposition. All of them shouted together, "Be ashamed of God and repent." The pressure of protest was so profound that the caliph took his words back and raising his hands towards Holy Mecca, said, "O God! I am the first to return to You!"

Execution orders for the heads of oppositionists

The incident of the Egyptians seemed to have ended. They had already left Medina for Egypt but on their way they encountered Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s slave going towards Egypt at a certain place. They thought of the possibility of his carrying a letter of the caliph for the governor of Egypt, Abdullah ibn Abi-Sarh**Error! Bookmark not**

defined.. Therefore, they started searching his belongings and in the middle of his water-pot found a letter hidden inside a tin pipe. The content of the letter ordered that when Amr ibn Budayl entered Egypt his neck should be cut off, the hands of Kinanah, Urwah, and Abu-Udays cut off, and after their being weltered in their own blood, all of them should be hanged. Seeing such a letter caused the Egyptians to lose their self-control completely, and all of them returned from midway and met Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and presented the letter to him.

Ali (ʿa) entered Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s home and showed the letter to him. Uthman swore that the handwriting of the letter was that of his official writer and the seal upon the letter was his own seal, but he wasn't aware of the existence of such a letter. Apparently, the caliph wasn't aware of the letter and this act had been done by the people in his near circle, like Marwan ibn al-Hakam, especially as the seal of the caliph was kept by Hamran ibn Aban and, after his transfer to Basra, was now with Marwan.

The Egyptian delegation besieged the caliph's home once again and requested to meet him, and when they saw him, asked, "Did you write this letter?" Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** swore in the name of God and said, "I am not aware of it." The representative of the delegation replied, "If such a letter has been written without your knowledge, then you don't deserve to be caliph and run the affairs of Muslims. Quit the caliphate as soon as possible." The caliph replied, "I will never take off the dress that has been put upon me by God." The boldness of the Egyptians made the Umayyads**Error! Bookmark not defined.** upset. But instead of realizing the real reason, they regarded Ali (ʿa) as the main factor of boldness behind the delegation against the caliph. Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** cried upon them and said, "You know very well that I don't have any camel in this valley. I made the Egyptians return, but now I can't do anything else." Then he said, "O God, I am disgusted with their accusations and their eagerness for the caliph's blood, and in case an incident occurs, I don't bear the least responsibility for it."

All indicators proved clearly that the letter had been written by either Marwan or on his orders. The Egyptians asked the caliph to hand over Marwan to them, but he refused to hand over the person responsible for that mischief. Therefore, the siege of the caliph's home became further tightened, and even carrying of water inside the home was not allowed. The caliph requested the surrounding people to inform Imam Ali (ʿa) as soon as possible to send some quantity of water to the caliph. Imam Ali (ʿa) with

the Hashemites' help sent three water skins of water inside the caliphs' home. The Hashemites were encountered with the resistance of people besieging the home while sending water inside, and some of them were injured, but ultimately succeeded in sending the water inside.

Rumors about the caliph's letters during the siege

During the siege, Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** wrote a letter to Muʿawiyah informing him that the people of Medina had become infidels after breaking allegiance with him, and therefore, asked him to send warriors to Medina as soon as possible. But Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** didn't show any response to the caliph's request and said that he wouldn't stand against the friends of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**! Also, the caliph wrote letters to Yazid ibn Asad in Damascus, Abdullah ibn Amir in Basra and those who were performing the Hajj pilgrimage headed by Ibn Abbas that year, but unfortunately, none of the letters produced any result. Some of them rushed to help the caliph but, before their arrival in Medina, learned about his assassination.

Marwan's actions hastened Uthman's elimination*Error! Bookmark not defined.*

The people responsible for the siege imposed on the caliph's home weren't interested in attacking his home. Their endeavors were to disallow water and food stuff to enter it so that the caliph and his courtiers should surrender to their demands. But Marwan killed one of the revolutionaries, Urwah al-Laythi, which resulted in their attacking the home. In this attack, three of the caliph's supporters, Abdullah ibn Wahab, Abdullah ibn Awf and Abdullah ibn Abd al-Rahman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** were killed. Attackers from Amr ibn Hazm's home were able to gain access to the caliph and terminated his life. Inside the home, Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s slave Naqil was killed by Malik al-Ashtar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Amr ibn Ubayd**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

The intensity of attack was so severe that the Umayyads,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who were responsible for the security of the caliph and his courtiers, all ran away, and Ummu-Habibah, Abu-Sufyan**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s daughter the Holy Prophet's widow, hid them inside her home and this episode is famous as *Yawm al-Dar*. The caliph was killed by Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Kinanah ibn Bishr, Sawdan ibn Hamran, Amr ibn al-Hamq and Umayr ibn Sabʿ. During the time of caliph's murder, his

wife Na'ilah threw herself upon her husband's half-dead body and as a result two of her fingers were sheared off preventing the cutting off of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s head from his body, but the strokes of attackers finished his life, and after a few moments, his body without his soul was lying in a corner of his home.

ALLEGIANCE OF PEOPLE WITH IMAM ALI

Error! Bookmark not defined.The third caliph's harsh behavior with the righteous companions, his undesirable distribution of wealth and property, and his handing over government affairs in the hands of incompetent people from the Umayyads**Error! Bookmark not defined.** caused his death. On the 18th of Dhu'l-Hijjah 35 A.H., Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was killed in his own home by the Egyptian and Iraqi revolutionaries with the cooperation of a group of companions of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. The spread of the news of Uthman's assassination shocked the Muslims of Medina and its surrounding areas. Every one started thinking about the future leader of the Muslims and people like Talhah, al-Zubayr, and Sa'd**Error! Bookmark not defined.** saw themselves potential candidates for the caliphate more than others.

The revolutionaries knew it well that because of the caliph's murder the situation of various Islamic countries would become chaotic. So, they decided to fill this vacuum as soon as possible, elect a caliph, and make allegiance with him before returning to their native lands. They were looking for one who, during these twenty five years, would have remained completely loyal to Islamic teachings and traditions of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and they found no one besides Ali ('a).

Others were polluted by the world**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. Talhah and al-Zubayr and individuals like them, during the period of third caliph, spent their time managing their worldly affairs, collecting income from their estates, and building palaces in this or that city, shearing off their bonds with the traditions of the Holy Prophet (s) as well with the methods of Abu-Bakr and Umar.

In spite of Ali's name being upon the tips of everybody's tongue and during the period when the caliph's home was besieged by the revolutionaries, Imam Ali ('a) was the only messenger acceptable to both parties and tried his best to silence the crises in a way acceptable to both parties. But factors that, in the episode of Saqifah, caused Imam Ali's removal from the scene were all still present in their same condition. Had it not been for the absolute decision and pressure of the powerful revolutionaries and general opinion, the same factors, **Error! Bookmark not defined.**for the fourth

time, would have removed him from the scene and caliphate would have been given to any other senior companion of the Prophet (s).

Had Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** died a natural death, the situation in Medina would have remained unchanged. The companions who had acquired a lot of prestige and wealth during Uthman's caliphate would never have voted for the government of Ali (ʿa), and if a council had decided it, it would have produced a definite result against him. The directors of the political scene would have motivated the dying caliph to appoint one of their liking just as Abu-Bakr had appointed Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** earlier.

This group knew very well that if Ali (ʿa) would take affairs of caliphate in his own hands, he would confiscate their wealth and property and would select none of them for the higher positions of his caliphate. This was written on the forehead of Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and they knew his moral standards. Therefore, when Imam Ali (ʿa) didn't allow Talhah and al-Zubayr to interfere in his administrative affairs, they immediately broke their allegiance and began the bloody War of the Camel. Factors which went against Imam Ali (ʿa) at Saqifah consisted of the following:

1. Killing the close relatives of infidels who fought against the Holy Prophet and Muslims in the battles of Badr, Uhud, and al-Khandaq... etc. turned into *companions* of the Holy Prophet.

2. Ancient enmity that existed between the Hashemites and other tribes, especially, the Umayyads,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** another element not less in strength but rather more powerful, was the intense A'ishah's antagonism towards Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

During Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s caliphate, A'ishah was a political heavy-weight. She repeatedly encouraged people to spill Uthman's blood because his religion had been exposed to transformations. The prestige that A'ishah was awarded by Abu-Bakr and Umar and a lot of traditions that she narrated from the Holy Prophet (s) resulted in her being a heavy political balance in favor of those who were liked by her and a means of serious trouble for those who were disliked by her. A'ishah's opposition to Imam Ali (ʿa) was due to the following reasons:

Firstly, in the fabricated incident of *Ifk,* Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** suggested divorcing her.

Secondly, Lady Fatimah (ʿa),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** the honorable daughter of the Holy Prophet (s),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** had children from Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** while A'ishah wasn't able to give a child to the Prophet (s).

Thirdly, A'ishah knew that Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was not happy with her father's caliphate and regarded him as the usurper of Fadak.

In addition to that, Talhah was A'ishah's cousin and al-Zubayr was the husband of her sister Asma', and these two individuals wished to occupy the caliphate. A'ishah's unhappiness with Ali's government can be seen from the following episode:

In the event of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s murder, A'ishah was in Mecca. Having performed the Hajj pilgrimage, she started her journey to Medina. On the way, in a place named Sarf, she learned about the caliph's murder and the homage paid by the Emigrants and the Helpers to Ali (ʿa). This news displeased her so intensely that she desired her death and said, "Alas! Would the heavens have fallen upon my head." Then she returned to Mecca and said, "Uthman has been killed as oppressed and by God I am going to take his revenge." The reporter of the caliph's murder dared to challenge her and asked, "Until yesterday, you told people to kill Uthman because he had become an infidel, how do you consider him as oppressed today?" She replied, "The revolutionaries made him repent first and then killed him."(1)

Revolutionaries' allegiance with Imam Ali*Error! Bookmark not defined.*

Although the abovementioned persons tried to deprive Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** of caliphate for the fourth time, the power of revolutionaries and backing of the general public opinion made their efforts less effective and the supporters of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** came together to Imam Ali's home and said that there was no one more deserving than him for the caliphate.

"After Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s murder, such a huge gathering of Muslims gathered in the mosque that the mosque was over-flooded with people. The aim of the assembly was to appoint a caliph. Distinguished personalities from the Emigrants and the Helpers, like Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Yasir, Abu'l-Haytham ibn

(1) *Tarikh al-Tabri* 5/173.

al-Tayyihan, Rafiʿ ibn Abi-Rafiʿ, Malik ibn Ajlan, Abu-Ayyub al-Ansari and others expressed their allegiance for Ali. More than others, Ammar talked about Ali and said, "You have seen the situation of the previous caliph. If you don't move fast, you may encounter the same destiny again. Ali is the best person for this task and all of you are well aware of his distinctions and previous records." At that moment, all of them shouted together unanimously, "We are ready to accept him as caliph.' After that, all of them left that place and surrounded Ali's home."(1)

Imam Ali (ʿa) himself described the arrival of the crowd towards his home as follows: "Like thirsty camels, when the camel driver opens their headbands and, loosening their ropes, releases them, they rushed towards me; I thought they wanted to kill me or some of them wanted to kill some others in my presence."(2)

People, like the hair on the neck of a hyena, encircled me, and from every direction severely pressed me, until al-Hasan and al-Husayn were almost trampled by them and the side of my dress and cloak were torn off. Like a flock of sheep, they surrounded me until I accepted their allegiance."(3)

Imam Ali (ʿa) responded to their request, saying, "I will be better as your advisor than your ruler." They refused to accept and said, "Until we make allegiance with you, we will not let you leave." Imam Ali (ʿa) said, "Now that you are insisting, the ceremony of allegiance should be performed in the mosque, since allegiance with me shouldn't be hidden and should be done with the permission of the Muslim masses." Imam Ali (ʿa) walked ahead of the crowd towards the mosque, and the Emigrants and Helpers made allegiance with him. Then other groups joined them. The first persons who made allegiance with him were Talhah and al-Zubayr. After that, others pressed his hand as an indication of allegiance with him. Except for six people, all of them voted for his caliphate and leadership.

Most natural allegiance

In the history of caliphate, no caliph was elected like Ali (ʿa) unanimously, and he was not selected only by some companions from the Emigrants and Helpers and some Muslim scholars but also by all people. Only Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** obtained caliphate in this way. He,

(1) Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.** 4/8.

(2) *Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.**, sermon 53.

(3) *Ibid.* sermon 3.

in one of his own sermons, described the unprecedented uproar of welcome by the people for his allegiance as follows: "The shoe laces got untied, the cloak fell from the shoulder, the feeble were getting trampled, and joy of the people for my allegiance reached such a limit that a child became joyful, the old and weak came for the allegiance, and daughters, to witness the scene of allegiance, lifted their veils."

Yet, Abdullah ibn Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** refused to make allegiance with Imam Ali (ʿa) because he knew that caliphate, for Ali (ʿa), wasn't the goal. He didn't want to break his head for its sake, but only desired to establish truth, implement justice, and return the lost rights of the feeble and destitute. On the second day of the allegiance, the 26th of Dhu'l-Hijjah, 35 A.H., Abdullah came to Imam Ali (ʿa) with the intention of discouraging him from accepting the caliphate by creating doubts. He said, "It is better to assign the task of caliphate to a council, because all people aren't ready for your caliphate." At this moment, Imam Ali (ʿa) become angry and said, "Woe upon you! I didn't ask them to make allegiance with me; did you not see their onslaught? Rise and leave, O ignorant one." Umar's son didn't find the environment of Medina favorable for him; therefore, he moved to Mecca because he knew that Mecca was the sacred immune place of God, and Imam Ali (ʿa) would never dishonor its immunity.

The Imam's words indicate that there was no compulsion or reluctance in the allegiance of people with him, and those who made allegiance with him did it so with complete satisfaction, although they pressed his hand with various expectations. Even Talhah and al-Zubayr, who regarded themselves as co-equal with him, either with the expectation of benefiting from his leadership or with the fear of opposing general public opinion, made allegiance with Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. Al-Tabari narrates two narrations about the allegiance of these two people, but the narration which proves their allegiance was given with their own freewill is quoted more than the second narration, probably because he possesses more belief in the first narration than of the second.

Imam Ali's words in this matter testify the second category of narrations. When these two individuals broke their allegiance and thereby committed a great offence, they propagated among the people that they had not made their allegiance with Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** of their own freewill and liking. Imam Ali (ʿa) replied to both of them, "Al-Zubayr imagines that he paid allegiance with his hand and not with his heart. That is not true; he admitted his allegiance and claimed bonds of

kinship. He had better bring an argument or witness or return one more time to the allegiance that he has broken."[1]

Imam Ali (ʿa) revealed the truth in his discussions with Talhah and al-Zubayr and reminded them of their insistence upon allegiance. He added, "I never had any liking for caliphate and there was no goal for me in it. You invited me to it and insisted that I take over the ruling affairs."[2]

Historical lies

Sayf ibn Umar,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** one of the spreaders of historical lies, endeavored in his narrations to deviate the path of history through fabricating baseless matters. He narrated in this matter that the allegiance of Talhah and al-Zubayr was accomplished due to the fear of Malik al-Ashtar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s sword. This matter, notwithstanding whatever al-Tabari has narrated earlier, contradicts and is completely opposed with the freedom of electing Ali's government. Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** didn't interfere in the lives of those six people and left them alone. When it was said to the Imam (ʿa) to dispatch one for them, he replied, "I don't have any need for their allegiance."

Fortunately, al-Tabri, in his book of history, bases the contents of the book upon documents and the documentations of its narrations are specific; therefore, a diagnosis of the correct from the incorrect is easy. The hero of those narrations which are inclined towards the three caliphs and unfavorable towards the family of the Prophet (s) is Sayf Ibn Umar, about whom**Error! Bookmark not defined.** Ibn Hajar, in *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib*, wrote, "He is man who fabricates lies. His quotations are worthless and all of his narrations are denied by scholars. He is also accused of atheism."[3]

Unfortunately, his fabricated narrations, after al-Tabari, were quoted in different books of history like that of Ibn Asakir, Ibn al-Athir, Ibn Kathir and Ibn Khaldun. All of them, without research, emulated al-Tabari and imagined that whatever had been narrated by al-Tabari was an absolute reality.

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(1) *Nahj al-Balaghah*, sermon 7.

(2) *Ibid*. sermon 200.

(3) Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib* 4/296.

Roots of conflicts and uprisings

The environment that Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** inherited from the thirteen years of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s government was full of affluence and spoils of war that had been obtained by the victory of Muslims in different countries. Existence of wealth and abundance of spoils of war wasn't a knot that couldn't have easily been loosened by Imam Ali (ʿa). The problem was its method of distribution. From the end of the second caliph's reign and throughout Uthman's government, the traditions of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** were changed completely and a powerful group associated with the clan of the caliph had kept the spoils of war for themselves and, as a result, the great class difference and social oppression developed in the Muslim society.

During the period of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** as well as the period of first caliph, until 15 or 20 A.H., the spoils of war and the wealth wasn't accumulated but distributed equally among Muslims. But the second caliph founded the public treasury and appointed salaries for people in accordance with their social classes and privileges, and created an office for this task. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid**Error! Bookmark not defined.** quoted the amount of salaries of a group of Muslims as follows:

For al-Abbas, uncle of the Prophet (s): 12,000/yr;

for every wife of the Prophet (s): 10,000/yr and

among them 2,000 more for A'ishah;

for the veterans of the Battle of Badr, the Emigrants: 5,000/yr; and

for the Helpers 4,000/yr;

for the veterans of the Battle of Uhud up to the al-Hudaybiyah Truce 4,000/yr,

for the companions after that truce 3000/yr; and

for those who participated in the military campaigns after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** 2,500, 2,000, 1,500, and 200/yr, in accordance with their particulars and ranks.[1]

Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** claimed that through this means he wanted to absorb the nobles towards Islam, but in the last year of his life he used to say that if he remained alive he would distribute the wealth

(1) Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balahgah* 3/154.

equally the way it was distributed by the Prophet (s). This innovation of Umar became the foundation of class difference in Islam, and during Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s caliphate, the split became wider and the differences more pronounced.

Ali ('a) wanted to return the people to the method and traditions of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** by completely destroying class differences and distributing the spoils of war equally. He was encountered with difficulties because the distribution of wealth equally resulted in endangering the interests of some groups.

WHO OPPOSED IMAM ALI?

These differences and the split into two groups after the election of Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** as the caliph that appeared among Muslims was totally unprecedented, and never before was such a split noticed during the rule of the previous three caliphs. In spite of the fact that the first caliph's appointment encountered the uproar of complaints from those who considered the position of caliphate to be appointed divinely by God Almighty, it wasn't too long before the situation calmed down and various groups closed their lips and ignored their rights for the sake of superior Islamic goals. Although the selection of the two other caliphs wasn't without any conflict, that uproar was subdued and both caliphs were able to continue in their situations. But after the selection of Imam Ali (ʿa), some groups openly declared their opposition against him and a profound split developed in the Islamic community.

Their opposition to Ali's government had ancient roots. A large number of relatives of the opposition groups were killed by Ali (ʿa) during the wars. During the days of allegiance, al-Walid ibn Utbah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** said to Ali (ʿa), "My father on that day of the Battle of Badr was killed by you, yesterday you didn't help my brother Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, and the father of Saʿid ibn al-Aas was killed by you on that day of the Battle of Badr and you treated Marwan as an abject, unintelligent…"

What gave the opponents an excuse consisted of two issues:

1. Cancellation of undesirable discrimination in the distribution of public treasury, and

2. Dismissal of incompetent officials of the previous caliph.

These two issues caused the world-worshippers and the over-ambitious to rebel against Imam Ali (ʿa) to regain the wealth and property which they had accumulated illegitimately, but it was now taken back by Imam Ali (ʿa), desired to return people to the time of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and revive his style and tradition in the affairs of leadership. Unfortunately, the piety and righteousness during the life of the Prophet (s) had been forgotten, moral values had changed, and the method of the Holy Prophet (s) was forgotten. Undesirable discrimination had already entered the psyche of people and the affairs of leadership had been assigned to debased individuals.

In the council of six persons, Abd al-Rahman,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** the famous capitalist of the people of Quraysh, proposed to Ali (ʿa) to agree to rule in accordance with the Book of God, the Prophet's traditions and the method of Abu-Bakr and Umar, but Ali (ʿa) didn't accept his condition and said, "I will rule in accordance with the Book of God, the Prophet's traditions and my own jurisprudence and not on the style of the previous caliphs."**Error! Bookmark not defined.** This resulted that he should be deprived of government for twelve years and Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** should take over the ruling affairs in his own hands. Now that the Imam (ʿa) had taken over the ruling affairs in his own hands, the time arrived to revive the Holy Prophet's traditions in the distribution of the public treasury. The method of the holy Prophet (s) was that he never accumulated it; rather, he distributed it entirely equally between Arabs, non-Arabs, black and white without making the least difference.

Imam Ali's sermon before the distribution of the public treasury

Imam Ali (ʿa) delivered the following sermon before ordering the distribution of the public treasury: "O People! None has been born from a mother in the world as a slave and maid and all of you are independent and free. God has blessed some of you with plenty of blessings, and the one who is in adversity should practice patience, and with his patience shouldn't lodge a complaint with God. Presently, the public treasury with me is ready for distribution and will be distributed among the white and black equally."(1)

When the speech of Imam Ali (ʿa) reached this point, Marwan looked at Talhah and al-Zubayr and said, "With these words, Ali meant that you will not be given preference over others."

Al-Iskafi, an Arab writer, in *Naqd al-Uthmaniyyah*, refuted al-Jahiz's words and quoted the Imam's speech in more detail as follows: "Ali, on the second day of allegiance, on Saturday, the 19th of Dhu'l-Hijjah, 35 A.H., went to the pulpit and in a detailed speech said: 'O People! I invite you towards the shining path of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** by executing my orders in society. Whatever I ask you to do, do it; and from whatever I prevent you, abstain from it.' Then, looking right and left, he added, 'O People! Regarding the group who is charmed with the world and has become owners of water, land, horses, slaves and beautiful

(1) Al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi* 8/68.

maids, whenever I prevent them from this abjectness and remind them of their religious obligations, they shouldn't criticize me and say that the son of Abu-Talib has deprived them of their rights.

The one who thinks that companionship with the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** gives superiority above others must know that the criteria for superiority is something else. Superiority belongs to one who obeys the commands of God and the Prophet and submits to the code of Islam. The rights of all people are thus equal. You are servants of God and the wealth is His Alone; therefore, it will be distributed amongst you equally. No one possesses any superiority above anyone else. Tomorrow, the public treasury will be distributed among you, Arabs and non-Arabs, equally."(1)

Method of distribution

The Imam (ʿa) ordered his scribe and secretary, Ubaydullah ibn Abi-Rafiʿ that he should pay every one of the Emigrants Helpers an amount of three Dinars. At that moment, Sahl ibn Hunayf complained and said, "Is it desirable that I should be treated equally with this black person who was my slave until yesterday?" The Imam (ʿa) replied, "In the Book of God, I don't see any difference between the children of Ishmael (Arab) and the children of Isaac."

Dismissal of previous officials

The most important political decision of the Imam (ʿa) was the dismissal of the officials of the previous caliph and Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was at the top. Ali (ʿa), since the first day, when he accepted caliphate, had decided to dismiss all those who spent the wealth of the public treasury to fulfill their own political aims and objectives, allocate it to their children, and established their governments like Caesar and Khosrow. One of the objections of the Imam (ʿa) against Uthman was the reinstatement of Muʿawiyah as the governor of Syria and people heard this from the Imam's tongue repeatedly.

Imam Ali (ʿa), in the beginning of 36 A.H., selected very distinguished and righteous personalities for the administration of the provinces. He dispatched Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Hunayf to Basra, Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Shihab to Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Ubaydullah ibn Abbas to Yemen,

(1) Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* 7/37.

Qays ibn Saʿd to Egypt, and Sahl ibn Hunayf to Syria and, all of them, except Sahl who returned from midway, entered the provinces of their assignments and took control of the ruling affairs in their own hands.

The dismissal of the past governors, especially Muʿawiyah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was under constant discussion. A group of short-sighted people regarded this as an inadequacy of Ali's government and reason for the political instability that followed. They claim that since Ali (ʿa) didn't possess political gimmicks and trickery, he dismissed Muʿawiyah and those like him and as a result had to face severe tragic encounters. If he hadn't touched the composition of the past officials, allowed them to dominate affairs and left them upon their seats for a little longer and dismissed them later on, he would never have encountered the tragic incidents of the War of the Camel and the War of Siffin, and would have been more successful in his government and ruling affairs.

During those prime days of Ali's government, some people did suggest this to Ali (ʿa), but he refused to accept their advice. Al-Maghirah ibn Shuʿbah, one of the hypocritical Arab politicians, went to his home when he learned about Ali's decision and talked to him confidentially, "Expediency dictates that you should reinstate the commanders of Uthman for one more year in their places. When they succeed in taking allegiance for you from the people, your rulership will become absolutely firm over the Islamic empire from east to west, and you will completely dominate the ruling affairs. Then you can dismiss and reinstate them as you like." Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** in reply said, "By God, I will not tolerate flattery in religion nor assign the affairs of the country to debased people."

Al-Maghirah said, "If you don't accept my suggestion for all the officials of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, at least compromise with Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** so that he can take allegiance for you from the people of Damascus and then, with complete ease and confidence, remove him from his position." Imam Ali (ʿa) replied, "By God, I cannot allow Muʿawiyah to dominate the life and wealth of the people even for two days."

Al-Maghirah was disappointed by Ali (ʿa) for not getting influenced by him and left his home. The next day, he once again came to the Imam's, accepted his verdict upon Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and said, "It isn't worth your position to live with fraud and deceit; dismiss Muʿawiyah too, like the others, as soon as possible."

Ibn Abbas said, "I told Ali (ʿa) that if al-Maghirah proposed

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s reinstatement, he wouldn't have any other aim but to show his good intentions for you, but in his second proposal he is perusing an objective opposite to his first suggestion. In my opinion, it is prudent not to dismiss Muʿawiyah from his job until he makes allegiance with you as well as obtains allegiance from the people of Damascus for you. That would be the time to remove him from Damascus. Yet, the Imam (ʿa) didn't accept my opinion either."

The issue of dismissal of the past officials, especially Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, and the Imam's goals should be analyzed. Was the reinstatement of vicious officials against the interest of Muslims and Islam, or, was it in the interest of domestic affairs, to consider their reinstatement more prudent? Or, was the path of piety and politics the same? If one other than Imam Ali (ʿa) had occupied the seat of caliphate, would he have had no alternative except dismissing them? If after Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Muʿawiyah had been selected for the position of caliphate, would he have any other alternative except the dismissal of past officials?

Reasons for Mu'awiyah's dismissal*Error! Bookmark not defined.Error! Bookmark not defined.*

Reinstatement of individuals like Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was against the piety and righteousness of the Imam (ʿa), but the debate here is whether this procedure was or wasn't in accordance with politics, expedience, wealth accumulation and farsightedness. If an impious person was in the place of the Imam and was brought by means of the same group that was responsible for bringing the Imam (ʿa), would it be possible for him to leave such individuals in their positions? Or the wisdom and farsightedness of the Imam, plus piety and the superior interest of Islam, required it to dismiss such individuals and assign sensitive Islamic positions to individuals who should be acceptable to Muslims and revolutionaries?

Some people support the first point of view and say that the piety of the Imam (ʿa) dictated the dismissal of such individuals; otherwise, the interest of Imam (ʿa) would have made it prudent to leave Muʿawiyah alone, compromise with him for the time being, so that he could have avoided battles like Siffin and al-Nahrawan. However, other researchers like the eminent Egyptian scholar, Abbas Mahmud al-Aqqad, the author *Abqariyyat al-Imam Ali,* as well as his contemporary writer, Hasan al-Sadr**,** hold the second point of view and, with clear arguments, prove that if

the Imam (ʿa) had followed the other path, he would have to face severer problems. The dismissal of Muʿawiyah wasn't only due to his piety but also accumulation of wealth, farsightedness, and interests of governing required the termination of such corrupt elements from the beginning of his caliphate.

It is true that after the dismissal of Muʿawiyah, the**Error! Bookmark not defined.** Imam (ʿa) faced the oppositions of the people of Damascus, but in case of his reinstatement not only would he have to face the opposition of this group but also the opposition of the oppressed revolutionaries, who had brought the Imam (ʿa) to caliphate, which would have resulted in compounding the opposition and complexities manifold, making the Islamic society suffer more serious discord and losses. It is necessary to understand this point of view:

1. Imam Ali (ʿa) was elected to caliphate by the deprived and oppressed revolutionaries who faced severe oppression and tyranny from Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s functionaries and had gathered in Medina and finally killed him. The degree of their rebellion and wrath was so great that individuals like Talhah and al-Zubayr preferred silence and were forced to make allegiance with Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. This group of revolutionaries pressed Ali's hand with the expectation that he would eradicate the prolonged corruption and destruction caused by the ruler's agents.

Alongside were the righteous companions who were completely disgusted with Uthman but remained silent and only after his murder made allegiance with the Imam (ʿa). On the other hand, the oppression and corruption of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** were not hidden from anyone. If Ali (ʿa) had shown the least hesitation, his actions would have certainly been interpreted as nothing except a sort of reconciliation with Muʿawiyah and a neglect of the supreme objectives of the revolutionaries and righteous companions. Reinstatement of individuals like Muʿawiyah would have been considered sort of political expedience or deception in the eyes of the pious and righteous, and the more Muʿawiyah would have used it for his purification, the Imam (ʿa) would have suffered damage directly proportionate to it. The stormy and fiery sentiments of people would have been silenced only with the firm and immediate dismissal of the son of Abu-Sufyan**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

If Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** had shown the mildest

reconciliation with Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, he would have lost a majority of his supporters during the prime days of his caliphate, and their spirit of rebellion and disobedience would have been agitated once more and would have created a formidable pillar of opposition against Ali (ʿa). Only a minority would have remained available under all conditions, to surrender and be loyal to the Imam (ʿa). This would have led to division and discord at the center of the Islamic government. The masses that formed the solid backing of the Imam (ʿa) would scatter into groups of supporters and opponents, and the lamp of Imam Ali's government would have been silenced during those very first days.

2. Assuming that the extremely angry revolutionaries had accepted a reconciliation of Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** with Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and, in the united ranks of supporters of Imam Ali (ʿa), no division and discord would have taken place, it must be seen what kind of reaction Muʿawiyah would have shown. Would he have accepted the invitation of Imam Ali (ʿa) to take allegiance from the people of Syria for him and the Imam's concerns about Syria would have eased and resolved satisfactorily? Or Muʿawiyah with his sharpness would have known that this reconciliation wouldn't last and after having his total dominance in the entire domain of Islamic government, Ali (ʿa) would eventually fire him from his position, ending his stubbornness forever?

Muʿawiyah would never have accepted the Imam's invitation. Instead, he would utilize that opportunity like the clothing of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** soaked with his blood to strengthen his own position among the Syrians and accuse Ali (ʿa) of involvement in Uthman's murder.

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** knew better than Ibn Abbas that Ali's reconciliation with him would be temporary and he wouldn't have accepted the Imam's invitation, instead he would have thought about another alternative.

Opportunity that could have been lost

The greatest opportunity that Muʿawiyah possessed was Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s death. If he didn't use this opportunity in the very early days, it wouldn't be possible to use it later on. Muʿawiyah had already hung Uthman's bloody shirt with his wife's fingers upon the top of the pulpit of Damascus in order to arouse the people to avenge Uthman's blood who, according to Muʿawiyah, had been killed with encouragement

from Ali (ʿa).

If, during those early days, he had accepted Ali's invitation positively, then it would have been impossible for him to write the spilling of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s blood in the Imam's account and portray Uthman as oppressed. Uthman's murder was a historic opportunity that Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** used as a winning card against Ali (ʿa), and playing this card was possible only if he didn't accept Ali's invitation. Otherwise, making allegiance with the Imam (ʿa), and his leadership being fully established, the blood of Uthman would have been forgotten and the opportunity lost.

Establishment of a hereditary government

For years, with his special cunning, Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** used his selective benevolence to control people, exiled those who didn't tolerate his government, founded the infrastructure for a hereditary government and was lying in wait for Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s death so that he could achieve his old desire. Even after having been informed about the siege of the caliph's house by the revolutionaries, he didn't help him so that the shadow of Uthman's presence would disappear from his head as soon as possible and he could achieve his desired objective. Such a person would never have accepted the Imam's invitation; rather, he would have used it as an opportunity for his own benefit and the Imam's loss. History bears clear witness that Uthman desperately sought his help but, with complete awareness about his situation, he didn't rush to his help.

Imam Ali (ʿa), in one of his letters to Muʿawiyah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** writes, "You helped Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** on the day when it was in your own interest; yet, on that day you made him degraded and wretched when helping him was only in his interest."**Error! Bookmark not defined.**(1)

In another letter to Muʿawiyah, he**Error! Bookmark not defined.** (ʿa) wrote, "I swear in the name of God that no body killed your cousin except you, and I hope that like his sin, I could associate you with him."(2)

Ibn Abbas, in his own letter, wrote to Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, "By God, your lying in wait for Uthman**Error! Bookmark not**

(1) *Nahj al-Balaghah*, letter 37.

(2) Ibn Abd-Rabbih, *al-Iqd al-Farid* 2/223.

defined.'s death desired his annihilation and prevented people from his help. His letter and his desperate request seeking your help did reach you in time but you didn't pay any attention to it while you knew very well that people weren't going to leave him without killing him. If Uthman has been killed as an oppressed person, then in that case you happen to be his greatest oppressor."

Would he then have accepted the Imam's invitation and so easily given up the golden opportunity that destiny had provided him?

MUʿAWIYAH'S DESIRE FORERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED. CALIPHATE

The reasons described earlier clearly demonstrate that cutting off elements like Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** from the dignity of caliphate wasn't only based upon piety, righteousness and the right thing to do, but all would have proved that the path chosen by the Imam (ʿa) was the most prudent one that any realistic politician could have selected, and reconciliation with Muʿawiyah would have resulted in nothing except manifold loss.

Those simple-minded people who think that Ali (ʿa), without considering the result of his actions or appraising the political and military profits and losses, issued orders of Muʿawiyah's dismissal don't really know or have studied the issue superficially.

Here are some historical reasons relevant to this matter which clearly indicates that Muʿawiyah didn't have any other objective but to establish an apparent empire, and if the Imam (ʿa) had reinstated him as governor of Syria, he would have never been contented with it; instead, he would have abused it:

1. After the assassination of Uthman, al-Nuʿman ibn Bashir, with a letter from Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s wife and his blood-spattered clothing, started his journey towards Damascus and reported the situation of Medina to Muʿawiyah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who went upon the pulpit, took Uthman's clothing in his hands, showed it to the people, and invited them to avenge Uthman's blood. People, seeing the blood-spattered clothing, wept bitterly and said, "You are the cousin of the caliph and his guardian. We too, like you, want vengeance for his blood." Then they made allegiance with him as ruler of Syria.

Muʿawiyah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** in order to inform distinguished personalities who lived in the province of Syria, dispatched individuals as well as wrote letters to Shurahbil al-Kindi, an influential personality of the city of Homs, and requested him to make allegiance with him as the ruler of Syria. He replied, "You have committed the biggest blunder and asked me to make allegiance with you as a ruler of Syria. Vengeance for the past caliph's blood could be taken only by one who is caliph and ruler of a province. I make allegiance with you as caliph." When Shurahbil's letter reached Muʿawiyah, he become extremely excited and

read the letter for the people and sought their allegiance as caliph. Then he opened the chapter of communications with Ali (ʿa).

This chapter of history indicates that Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was already prepared to accept caliphate and, with the allegiance of an influential personality of the city of Homs, he immediately declared himself as candidate for it. He declared his caliphate in Syria and from the people of that area and, without paying any attention to the allegiance of the revolutionaries, the Emigrants and the Helpers with Ali (ʿa), took allegiance for himself. As though, during the past several years he had already prepared the ground and only a proposal seeking allegiance was enough to achieve it.

2. When Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** learned about the allegiance of the people of Medina with Ali (ʿa), before the letter from the Imam (ʿa) reached him, two letters were written by him, one for Talhah and another for al-Zubayr, in which he motivated and encouraged both of them to take control of the two large cities of Iraq; i.e. Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Basra. In his letter to al-Zubayr, he wrote, "I have taken allegiance for you from the people of Syria; therefore, make yourself ready to occupy Kufa and Basra as soon as possible. And after you, I will make allegiance with Talhah. As soon as possible, arise for the vengeance of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s blood and call people to rise."

Seeing the content of the letter, al-Zubayr became very happy, informed Talhah and all of them decided to rebel against Imam Ali (ʿa). Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** wrote another letter to Talhah whose content was totally opposed to the content of al-Zubayr's letter. He wrote, "I have made the ground ready for caliphate of both of you; whoever renounces the task of caliphate in favor of the other one will become the caliph after his death."(1)

There is absolutely no doubt that the objective behind provoking Talhah and al-Zubayr for claiming caliphate and occupying Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Basra was nothing except weakening Imam Ali's position and fortifying his own position in the Syrian political environment. By introducing schism among the ranks of Imam Ali (ʿa) with the cooperation of these two individuals, he could take over the government from Ali's hands, and in case of success, defeating Talhah and

(1) Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.** 1/7.

al-Zubayr would be an easy task.

3. Muʿawiyah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** at the very beginning and in the middle of the Battle of Siffin,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** proposed to Imam Ali (ʿa) to hand over the government of Syria and Egypt to him such that the revenue and taxes of these two provinces should belong to him, and after the death of the Imam, he should become the caliph. Here are the details of this matter:

Imam Ali (ʿa) dispatched Jarir al-Bujali with his letter to Damascus. He wrote in that letter, "The groups who made allegiance with Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** have also made allegiance with me. After the unanimous agreement of the Emigrants and Helpers and their allegiance with me, no one else possesses the right to being selected as caliph, whether he was present in Medina or not at the time of allegiance."

Jarir entered Damascus and handed over the letter to Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. But he showed reluctance and consulted individuals like Uqbah and Amr ibn al-Aas and ultimately expressed his heart's secret desire to him that if Ali (ʿa) could turn his eyes away from Syria and Egypt and hand over their income to him, only then would he accept his caliphate. The ambassador reported Muʿawiyah's point of view to the Imam (ʿa), who responded through a letter, writing, "Muʿawiyah doesn't want to make allegiance with me and eventually will achieve his objective. By prolonging the time and by presenting a self-government proposal for Syria and Egypt, he wants to fortify his position. In case he agrees with giving allegiance, so much the better; otherwise, quit Damascus and rush back."(1)

From the response of the Imam (ʿa), it is clearly visible that the objective of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was that allegiance and obedience to Ali (ʿa) shouldn't be upon his neck and he be made an autonomous ruler governing the two great provinces of Syria and Egypt, and the Imam (ʿa) shouldn't interfere in checking the financial accounts and appointment of officials in those areas. Only God knows that after fortifying his positions in that region, what cunning Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** would have undertaken to overthrow Imam Ali's government. The clear witness that Muʿawiyah desired caliphate and not simply to represent the Imam (ʿa) is what the Imam (ʿa) wrote in a

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah* 1/89.

letter to him, “Know that, Muʿawiyah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** you belong to the Released, and that caliphate for them isn’t permissible and with their allegiance caliphate of any one can’t be recognized, and they also don’t possess the right of membership in the selection council.”

Excuse in the name of Uthman*Error! Bookmark not defined.**’s killers*

One of the clear reasons that Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** desired caliphate was that, during Imam Ali’s caliphate, he pursued the issue of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**’s killers more than anything else and demanded the Imam to give them up so that the integrity of the Imam (ʿa) could be proved. He knew that Uthman’s killers weren’t limited to one or two people whom Imam Ali (ʿa) could have arrested and handed over to him. Lines of aggressors from Medina, Egypt and Iraq had surrounded Uthman’s house and killed him. The identification of such a group wasn’t possible. More than anyone else, Muʿawiyah realized this problem and his objective was to arrest all the opposition and not only those who were responsible for killing Uthman.

Notwithstanding it, investigation of such an episode was the responsibility of the caliph and not of his cousin. Handing over the killers of Uthman by the Imam (ʿa) to Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** in itself would have been accepting the caliphate of Muʿawiyah. Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** in one his letters wrote to Muʿawiyah, “In insisting for Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**’s killers, you are crossing the limit. If you return from your incorrect opinion, I will deal with you and others in accordance with the Book of God, but whatever you want (handing over the province of Syria to you) is similar to tricking an infant from taking milk from its mother’s breast.”

The clearest proof that vengeance of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**’s blood and surrender of Uthman’s killers wasn’t more than an excuse **Error! Bookmark not defined.**that when Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was martyred, Muʿawiyah took control of the ruling affairs and the only thing about which he never uttered a single word was the issue of Uthman’s blood and the arrest of his killers. Even when Uthman’s daughter caught Muʿawiyah’s skirt and asked him to avenge her father’s blood from the killers, he said, “This is a task that I can’t accomplish and it is sufficient that you are the daughter of the cousin of the caliph!”

FIGHTING THE RENEGADES; THE BATTLE OF THE CAMEL

Imam Ali's five-year government encountered three groups whose rebellion and transgression didn't recognize any limit and wanted nothing but the revival of the situation of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s government; selective benevolence without any basis, extravagance, government by incompetent and stubborn people like Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and fortifying the ruling power of the past governors.

In these battles, valuable blood of Muslim brothers was spilled; a group of the Holy Prophet's companions who had fought in the Battles of Badr and Uhud in the most sensitive moment of history of Islam in the company of the Prophet (s). This time, in the company of his righteous successor and caliph, they waged war to accomplish Imam Ali's exalted cherished goals and sacrificed their lives for this cause. Notwithstanding this, the precious time of the Imam (ʿa) that should have been utilized to train individuals and guide and educate the community through Islamic discourses was spent in defending the assault of these three groups who posed a great obstruction in the path of the Imam's sacred objective. Eventually, before he could accomplish his cherished goal and establish a world government based upon the principles and traditions of Islam, the sun of his government, after spreading its radiance for five years, set. The Islamic government, after his death, turned into a monarchy. The Umayyads and Abbasids passed it like a ball from hand to hand and the Islamic government remained only as a longing among the hearts of believers.

These three groups consisted of the following:

1. **Renegades*Error! Bookmark not defined.***: The heads of this group were Talhah and al-Zubayr who, under the cover of A'ishah and the generous support of the Umayyads, were able to dispatch a large group of warriors to occupy Basra. The Imam (ʿa) prosecuted them and fighting took place between the two groups in which Talhah and al-Zubayr were killed, their army dispersed and a group of them taken as prisoners of war, pardoned later by the Imam.

2. **Deviators from the Path of TruthError! Bookmark not defined.**: The head of this group was Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who, until the demise of the Imam, kept him engaged and the

Battle of Siffin**Error! Bookmark not defined.** took place between Ali (ʿa) and him in a region between Iraq and Syria in which the blood of more than one hundred thousand Muslims was spilled without the Imam (ʿa) accomplishing his ultimate objective, even though Muʿawiyah became confined only to the province of Syria.

3. **Apostates**: This group was also called Khawarij***Error! Bookmark not defined.***. They accompanied Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** until the end of the Battle of Siffin**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and were engaged in swordsmanship in his favor, but the fraudulent act of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** resulted in their rebellion against the Imam (ʿa) and they formed a group that was against both the Imam (ʿa) and Muʿawiyah. The danger of this group for Islam and Muslims as well as the Imam's government was much more serious than the previous two prime groups. Imam Ali (ʿa) confronted this group in the region of al-Nahrawan, scattered their lines and was ready to finally uproot them but he was martyred by one of them.

The Imam (ʿa) was aware of these happenings. It was in this background that when **Error! Bookmark not defined.**the revolutionaries surrounded the Imam's home and requested him to give his hand for allegiance, he said to them, "Leave me alone and search for someone else. We will encounter incidents that possess many faces; incidents that hearts and reason don't have the capacity to endure."(1)

His knowledge about these tragic episodes during his own rulership came from prophecies of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. Narrators reported that the Holy Prophet (s), once, said Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, "Ali! You will fight the renegades, the transgressors, and the apostates."**Error! Bookmark not defined.**(2)

Not only did Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** know about the occurrence of these tragic incidents but also knew the heads of the renegades known in history as the companions of the camel. Thus, the Imam had already learned from the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** about their combat against him and the Holy Prophet (s) personally warned al-Zubayr and A'ishah against that. Unfortunately, their attraction to government seduced and completely blinded them and they ultimately selected the path which terminated in transgression, sins and

(1) *Tarikh al-Tabri* 3/156.

(2) Al-Nuri, *Mustadrak al-Wasa'il* 3/140.

Divine wrath.

It is extremely unfortunate that when the truth returned towards its axis and the leadership in the hands of the Imam, who was trained from the earliest days to rule and lead, a group of opportunists rebelled against him. Great spiritual and material progress was expected from this chapter of Islam. Muslims and the Islamic government would have a complete renaissance through the powerful hand of Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and his government would become a precious, complete and perfect model for all times. Unfortunately, the opposition raised a flag of combat against him. The Imam (ʿa) expressed sorrow about such happenings in one of his own sermon, saying, "When I rose to manage the government, some people broke their allegiance with me, a group left the divine code and became apostates, and another group deviated from the path of truth. It was as though they hadn't listened to God's words when He said, '*The eternal abode belongs to those who aren't rebellious and don't indulge in corruption over the land.*' By God, they had listened to it and had memorized it, but the world decorated itself for them and they were charmed with its ornaments."

Childish excuse!

The renegades, Talhah and al-Zubayr and their followers, under pressure of the general public and gathering of the Emigrants and Helpers, were seemingly forced them to make the allegiance. They claimed that they had made allegiance apparently with the tongue and never voted for Ali's government sincerely. The Imam (ʿa) replied to them in one of his own speeches, "He admitted his allegiance but claims that in esoteric essence, he had things hidden in his heart. He should bring a witness to prove this matter or return to his earlier allegiance."(1)

Discard and duality

Talhah and al-Zubayr said to the Imam (ʿa), "We have made allegiance with you in order to be a partner in leadership," but the Imam (ʿa) rejected their condition and replied, "You made allegiance with me to help at the time of my distress."

Ibn Qutaybah wrote, "They looked towards Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and said, 'Do you know upon what basis we made allegiance with you?' The Imam (ʿa) replied, 'Yes, I know that; you

(1) *Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.**, sermon 8.

have made allegiance to obey me in the same manner you made allegiance with Abu-Bakr and Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.'

Al-Zubayr imagined that the Imam (ʿa) would hand him the governorship of Iraq, the way Talhah thought that the government of Yemen would belong to him. But the Imam's method of distributing the public treasury and dispatching others to govern Islamic provinces deprived them of attaining their desires. Therefore, they decided to run away from Medina to indulge in a conspiracy against the Imam (ʿa). Before his running away, al-Zubayr said in a general gathering of the people of Quraysh, 'Is it our punishment? We rebelled against Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, provided means for his murder, while Ali was sitting in his home. When he took over the ruling affairs in his own hands, he assigned ruling tasks to others.'"(1)

Roots of the rebel

These two simple-minded companions, fooled by Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s letter, decided to leave Medina for Mecca and gather the people and arrange the required equipment of war. In order to execute the plot prepared by Muʿawiyah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** they arrived in the presence of the Imam (ʿa) and said, "You have witnessed the oppression of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** with respect to the affairs of government and caliphate, and except for the Umayyads,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** no one is paying attention to anyone else. At present, God has blessed you with caliphate, so appoint us for the governorship of Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Basra."

The Imam (ʿa) replied, "Whatever God has bestowed upon you, be thankful for it, so that I can think about this matter. Be aware that I will appoint the people for government whose religion and trust I am satisfied with, as well as thoroughly aware of their morals."

Hearing these words, both of them became much more hapless than before. The Imam (ʿa) made it clear that he didn't trust both of them. Therefore, they changed their words and said, "Please, permit us to go to Mecca for performing a pilgrimage." The Imam (ʿa) replied, "Under the cover of pilgrimage, you possess other intentions in your mind." They swore in the name of God that except performance of pilgrimage they did not have any other ambition, but the Imam (ʿa) replied, "You are planning a deceit and want to break the allegiance." They repeated their oath again and made

(1) *Ibid*.

allegiance with the Imam (ʿa) once more. When both them left the Imam's home, he said to those who were present, "I can see them being killed in sedition." Some of the present in that assembly said to him, "Prevent them from undertaking their journey," but the Imam (ʿa) replied, "Their destiny and God's will shall befall."

Talhah and al-Zubayr, in spite of their intense oaths at Imam Ali's home, after leaving Medina for Mecca, denied their allegiance with Ali (ʿa) with whoever they met.

Return of A'ishah to Mecca from midway

It was during the siege of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s house by the revolutionaries that A'ishah left Medina for Mecca with the intention of performing Hajj. She was in Mecca when she heard the news of Uthman's murder but she wasn't informed about the people's electing a new caliph. So, she decided to leave Mecca for Medina and on her way back Medina, she met a man whom she asked about the situation there. He replied that siege of the caliph's home continued for eighty days, then he was killed, and after a few days, people made allegiance with Ali (ʿa). When A'ishah was informed about the unanimous allegiance of the Emigrants and Helpers with Ali (ʿa), she exploded with wrath and said, "Alas! If only that heaven would have fallen upon my head." Then she ordered her mount to be turned towards Mecca, because she had changed her opinion completely about Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and said, "By God, Uthman has been killed as one oppressed and I will demand vengeance from the killers."

The man who reported the incident to her said, "You were the prime person who declared that Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** had become an infidel and should be killed. Now what has caused you to change your words?" In reply, like one who shoots an arrow in the dark, she said, "Killers of Uthman made him repent and then killed him. Regarding Uthman, every one said words and I too said some words, but my last words are better then my previous ones."

That man composed these poetic verses regarding the irresponsible apology of A'ishah:

You issued the order for the caliph's killing,

You told us that he had renounced God's religion

It is absolutely certain that in his killing, we obeyed your order,

Therefore, his killer is the one who issued orders for his killing!

A'ishah rode off her mount in the Holy Mosque, went to a certain place there, and hung a curtain over there. People surrounded her place, and addressing them, she said, "People! Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** has been killed as one oppressed and I will seek vengeance for his blood."(1)

Base of Imam Ali's opponents*Error! Bookmark not defined.*

After**Error! Bookmark not defined.** people's allegiance with Imam Ali (ʿa), Mecca became the base of his opponents; namely, those who were against Ali (ʿa) or were scared of his justice because of treacheries committed by them, especially the officials of Uthman. They knew that the Imam (ʿa) would confiscate their wealth and persecute them in a court of law. Therefore, all of them gathered under cover of immunity of God's House and started making the plot for the Battle of the Camel.

Cost of the Battle of the Camel

The expense of the cost of the Battle of the Camel was borne by Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s officials who, during his rein, had freely looted the public treasury and accumulated huge amounts of wealth. The aim behind this payment was to topple the young government of Ali (ʿa) and return to a situation like before. Some of those who arranged the back-breaking expenses of this battle are as follows:

1. Abdullah ibn Abi-Rabiʿah, the governor of Yemen during Uthman's reign. He left Sana'a in order to help Uthman and midway learned about his murder, so he returned to Mecca. When he heard that A'ishah was inviting people to take vengeance for Uthman's blood, he entered the mosque and, sitting upon a couch, cried loudly, "Whoever is ready to participate in this battle to take vengeance for the caliph's blood, I will arrange his expenses for the journey." He helped equip a large group to participate in the combat.

2. Yaʿla ibn Umayyah, the commander-in-chief of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s army. He purchased six hundred camels and prepared them for movement outside Mecca and spent ten thousand Dinars in this cause. When Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** learned about this act he asked, "From where did the son of Umayyah obtain ten thousands Dinars? By God, if I get my hand upon the

(1) *Tarikh al-Tabri* 3/172.

son of Ibn Rabiʿah, I will confiscate his wealth and deposit it in the public treasury."

3. Abdullah ibn Amir, the governor of Basra. He ran away from Basra to Mecca with huge amounts of wealth. It was he who planned for the occupation of Basra and motivated Talhah, al-Zubayr and A'ishah to take this province in their control. In Mecca, all the runaways of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s government assembled together with Abdullah ibn Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, his brother Ubaydullah, and Marwan ibn al-Hakam. Uthman's sons and slaves, and a group of the Umayyads joined them.

In spite of all their cries and invitations through individuals with famous and identified faces, they couldn't succeed in motivating the masses in Mecca against the Imam (ʿa). They were helpless. Soldiers were obtained through the bestowals of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s dismissed ex-governors, but they needed a firm spiritual backing to motivate the religious sentiments of the Arabs living there. They decided to invite A'ishah and Hafsah to take over the spiritual leadership of this group.

A'ishah had raised the banner of Ali's opposition since her entrance in Mecca, but she never had a specific plan to execute. Therefore, when al-Zubayr dispatched his son Abdullah, who was also A'ishah's nephew, to Mecca to encourage her to join the uprising and go to Basra, she replied, "I have never ordered people to rise. I came to Mecca only to announce to people how their leader had been killed by a group after making him repent, so that people should rise up against those who rebelled against him and take the ruling affairs in their hands without consultation."

Abdullah said, "If this is your opinion against Ali and Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s killers, then why are you sitting as if retired from helping and cooperating against Ali, while a group of Muslims have already announced their readiness for an uprising?"

A'ishah said, "Be patient, let me think a little bit about this issue."

Abdullah from the tone of her reply assumed her readiness. While returning home, he promised Talhah and al-Zubayr that A'ishah had accepted his invitation. But, for the confirmation of the matter, he came to A'ishah the next day to obtain her certain and absolute approval; he then dispatched a group of people to announce loudly in mosques and marketplaces that A'ishah would revolt with Talhah and al-Zubayr and, in

this manner, the issue of uprising against Ali (ʿa) and occupying Basra became absolutely certain. Thus, those people cried out, "Know that the *mother of the believers* as well as Talhah and al-Zubayr are traveling towards Basra. Whoever loves Islam and is ready to wage war with those who consider spilling of Muslim's blood as permissible, any one who seeks vengeance of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s blood, should move with this group; and whoever doesn't have a mount and travel expense for the journey, here is his mount and travel expense."(1)

The plotters, in order to further accelerate the people's religious sentiments also went to see Hafsah, the daughter of Umar and the wife of the Holy Prophet (s), who said, "I am a follower of A'ishah; like her, I announce my readiness for going on this journey." Yet, when she prepared herself for the journey, her brother Abdullah intruded and prevented her; so, Hafsah sent a message to A'ishah, saying, "My brother has prevented me from accompanying you."

(1) *Tarikh al-Tabri* 3/167.

IMAM ALI'S PLANERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED. **FOR ARRESTING THE RENEGADES**

When the rebellion of the self-centered ruler of Syria reached the Imam (ʿa), he decided to strike a crucial blow upon Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** for his insubordination. While he was occupied in these thoughts, suddenly, a letter reached him from Ummu'l-Fadl, the daughter of al-Harith ibn Abd al-Muttalib, informing him about Talhah and al-Zubayr breaking their allegiance and marching towards Basra.

Receipt of this letter made the Imam (ʿa) change his direction from Syria to Basra to arrest the allegiance-breakers midway and destroy the evil in the bud. Due to this reason, he appointed Tammam, son of Abbas, as governor of Medina and Qutham ibn Abbas as governor of Mecca, and with seven hundred devoted warriors took the path of Basra. When he reached at al-Rabadhah, he learned that the allegiance-breakers had foreseen the probability of their being arrested midway; therefore, accompanied by individuals familiar with the path, they had entered Basra through a shortcut.

Since the unity between Talhah and al-Zubayr was just artificial and each one of them wanted to take over the ruling affairs in his own hand, a clear split between them was clearly apparent. Even on the path to Basra, the issue of leading the prayer reached a fine conflict as each one of them wanted to lead the prayer with their followers. Because of this division, A'ishah deprived both of them of leading the congregation prayer and Abdullah, son of al-Zubayr, was assigned the responsibility of leading the congregation prayer. A man said, "By God, if these two people defeat Ali (ʿa), they will never reach an agreement about the issue of caliphate."

Some of the Imam's companions advised him to renounce the persecution of Talhah and al-Zubayr, but he declined. His words are quoted as follows, "I swear by God that I shall not sit quiet and allow those people to do as they like. I shall not act like the hunted beast which can be lulled and fooled by its hunter and fall an easy prey to his tricky devices. But with the help of believers in the truth and justice of Islam, I shall try to suppress this revolt against God and religion. I declare that with the assistance of faithful followers, I shall always fight against the upholders of schism and hypocrisy and supporters of injustice and falsehood until I meet my death."

Re-organization of the armed forces

Having learned about the shortcut towards Basra, Imam Ali (ʿa) decided to pursue them till there with a group of no more then seven or nine hundred. A majority of them were experienced warriors and some of them had also participated in the Battle of Badr, but this number wasn't sufficient for combat with a large group hired for fighting as well as some tribes from around Basra. Therefore, the Imam (ʿa) decided to reorganize his army and seek help from the surrounding tribes obedient to him. Adi ibn Hatam went towards his own tribe, informed them about Imam Ali's movement for crushing allegiance breakers and in that assembly of tribal chiefs he said, "O elders of the Tay tribe! During the period of the Prophet (s), you refused to fight against him and in the incident of the Renegades, you supported him. Know that Ali is arriving here. You fought in the period of ignorance for this world. Now, as Muslims, fight for the Hereafter. If you want the world, plenty of bounties exist with God. I invite you towards the world and the Hereafter. Right now, Ali and the great fighters of Islam from the Emigrants, Helpers, veterans of Badr, and fighters who didn't participated in Badr, are coming towards you. Before it's too late, rise and rush to welcome the Imam."

Adi's speech created a strong fervor in that assembly and voices confirming their readiness were raised from every side to help and support the Imam (ʿa). When the Imam (ʿa) arrived, an old man stood up and welcomed him in the following manner, "Congratulation to you, O Commander of the Faithful. By God, even if your allegiance hadn't been upon our necks, because of your shining past accomplishments and kinship with the Prophet (s), we would have helped you. Follow the path of combat and all the people of the Tay tribe will follow you from behind and none of them will commit any offence with your army."

The result of Adi's action was that a group of horsemen accompanied the Imam's army, making the reorganization possible. Besides the Tay tribe, the Banu-Asad tribe also lived there. One individual, who was the chief of that tribe and was the Imam's servant from Medina, asked his permission to visit his tribe and invite them to help the Imam (ʿa). He succeeded in getting a group for Imam Ali's help and brought them with him to the garrison.

The success of this action wasn't like that of Adi, because Adi was the chief of his family and the munificence and benevolence of his father Hatam al-Ta'i had great influence on his tribe. The Tay tribe had already proved their

excellent Islamic steadfast belief and discipline in the incident of the Apostates, and after the death of the Holy Prophet (s),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** not even a single person among them apostatized, while the Banu-Asad tribe renounced their faith, but due to the painstaking campaigns of the Tay tribe, they returned to Islam.

On the path to Basra

Although Talhah and al-Zubayr were companions of the Holy Prophet (s),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** they didn't possess any position or power to rebel against the central government and lead the army from Mecca to Basra. Had the wife of the Holy Prophet (s) not accompanied them and the huge wealth of the Umayyads been at their disposal, their plot would have been destroyed right there in Mecca. Under cover of vengeance for Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s blood, they left Mecca and throughout the journey shouted the slogan of: "O seekers of Uthman's blood." But this slogan was so funny and ridiculous that the near relatives of Uthman laughed at it. The two following incidents testify to this fact:

Saʿid ibn al-Aas at the region of Dhat al-Irq met the caravan of the renegades whose leaders were Talhah and al-Zubayr. Saʿid, the Umayyad, looked at Marwan and asked, "Where are you going?" and Marwan replied, "We are going to avenge Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s blood." Saʿid asked, "Why are going so far away? Uthman's killers are the same who are walking behind you; Talhah and al-Zubayr."

Ibn Qutaybah, in this regard, spoke more transparently, "When Talhah, al-Zubayr and A'ishah dismounted at Abu-Tas in the region of Khaybar, Saʿid ibn al-Aas with al-Maghirah ibn Shuʿbah accompanying him with a black bow upon his shoulder, went to look for A'ishah and said, 'Where are you going?' and she replied, 'To Basra.' Saʿid asked, 'What do you want?' and she replied, 'Revenge of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s blood.' Saʿid said, 'O *mother of the believers*! The killers of Uthman are accompanying you.' Then he went near Marwan and said similar words to him, 'The killers of Uthman are the same people, Talhah and al-Zubayr, who, after killing Uthman, wanted the government for themselves, but since they did not accomplish their goal, they now want to wash blood with blood and their sin with repentance.'

Al-Maghirah ibn Shuʿbah who, after the martyrdom of Imam Ali (ʿa),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was regarded as the right hand of Muʿawiyah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** said on that day, 'O people!

If you have came out with the *mother of the believers*, ask her for a well-ending, if you have came out for the killers of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, his killers are your leaders; if you have came out to criticize Ali, say what criticism you have against him. I swear to you by God, practice abstinence from creating two seditions, Uthman's murder and combat with Ali, during one year.

Unfortunately, neither Saʿid nor al-Maghirah's words had any effect upon them. Saʿid took the path of Yemen and al-Maghirah of Ta'if and none of them participated in the Battle of the Camel."

Quick movement

Talhah and al-Zubayr traveled between Mecca and Basra at a very fast speed. They obtained fast running camels in order to send A'ishah to Basra as soon as possible. Midway, they encountered an Arab man of the Uraynah tribe mounting upon a fast running camel. They asked him to sell them their camel, but he said that the price was one thousand dirhams. The purchaser said, "Are you crazy? How can the value of a camel be one thousand dirhams?" The camel owner replied, "You don't know its value. No camel has the power to compete with it." The purchaser said, "If you know for whom I am purchasing this camel, you will give it away without asking for any dirham." He asked, "For whom do you want it?" He was told and due to his respect for the Prophet (s), the camel owner presented it to him freely without asking for anything. The purchaser, utilizing him as a guide, took him to the place where A'ishah's caravan stood. He gave him a female camel with four or six hundred dirhams, requested him to guide them through a portion of that plain, and he accepted.

The guide, familiar with that land, said, "'A'ishah asked me the name of every habitation and well that we traveled until we reached to the al-Haw'ab that the barking of its dogs was heard. She took her head out from camel litter and asked, "What is the name of this place?" and I replied, "Al-Haw'ab." A'ishah, on hearing this name, raised her voice and hit the shoulder of camel to make it kneel down and said, "By God! I am the same woman who passes through the land of al-Haw'ab and its dogs bark upon her camel."**Error! Bookmark not defined.** She repeated this sentence three times and cried that she should return home. This stop of her caused the halt of the caravan. The insistence for movement wasn't effective and until the next day, A'ishah stopped there. Ultimately, her nephew Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr**Error! Bookmark not defined.** came and said, "Start moving as soon as possible as Ali is pursuing us and it is possible that all of

us get caught in his paws."

Al-Tabari, due to prejudice, covered up the incident as mentioned above, but Ibn Qutaybah who preceded him (died in 276 A.H.) wrote, "When A'ishah became aware about the name of al-Haw'ab, she said to Talhah's son, 'I must go back because one day God's Prophet was talking to his wives and I was among them, when he said: I see coming that one of you passing through the land of al-Haw'ab and its dogs barking upon your camel. Then he looked at me and said: O red woman, be cautious lest you be that women.' But Talhah's son requested continuation of the path, which didn't work. Her nephew, Abdullah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** hypocritically swore that that land was not al-Haw'ab, which they had already passed during night.' Not only that, they stopped at this point and called a group of Bedouins and all of them testified to the lie that the name of the land wasn't al-Haw'ab. This type of testifying lies is unprecedented in the history of Islam. Then, the caravan continued upon its path and dismounted(1) near Basra to occupy the city where Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Hunayf had been appointed as its governor by Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**."

Arriving near Basra

When A'ishah's caravan reached the vicinity of Basra, a man from the tribe of Tamim requested her to inform the elders about her objective before entering the city. Responding to him, she wrote letters to the elderly personalities of Basra and dismounted at a place waiting for a reply. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid**Error! Bookmark not defined.** writes that Talhah and al-Zubayr, too, wrote letters to Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Hunayf and requested him to leave the governor's seat at their disposal. When their letter reached Uthman, he called al-Ahnaf ibn Qays and informed him about the content of the letter. Giving his advice, al-Ahnaf said, "They have rebelled for revenge of Uthman's blood, spilled their blood themselves and I think it is required that you should get ready to fight with them. You are the governor and people will listen to your words; therefore, before their arrival, you should go and meet with them." Uthman replied, "I have the same opinion but I am waiting for the Imam's order."

After al-Ahnaf, Hukaym ibn Jabalah entered. Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** read Talhah and al-Zubayr's letter for him and he too

(1) Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.** 9/312.

repeated words similar to al-Ahnaf, “Permit me to arise and fight against them. If they surrender to the Imam’s obedience, so far so good; otherwise, I will fight with all of them.” Uthman replied, “If the decision is to fight, I deserve more people for this task.” Hukaym replied, “As soon as possible, take action so that if they enter Basra, they may not be able to influence people’s hearts towards themselves, because of being accompanied by the Prophet’s wife, and leave you alone in this position.”

At this moment, a letter from the Imam (ʿa) reached Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Hunayf informing him about the allegiance breaking of Talhah and al-Zubayr and their movement towards Basra and ordering him to invite them to pay respect to their allegiance and show loyalty to it. If they accepted, he should behave with them in a nice manner; otherwise, let the matter be decided through war so that God make a judgment between him and them.” This letter came from al-Rabadhah and was dictated by him and written in the handwriting of his secretary Ubaydullah.

The governor immediately called two elderly personalities of Basra, Imran ibn Hussayn and Abu’l-Aswad al-Du'ali. He commanded them to go outside Basra and meet Talhah and al-Zubayr at the place where their caravan stood and inquire about their objective of mobilizing an army. They immediately went to the garrison and met Talhah, al-Zubayr and A'ishah. A'ishah said to them, “A group killed the leader of Muslims without any offence, spilled the blood of a respected person, plundered the forbidden wealth and didn’t pay respect to the month in which fighting isn’t permissible. I come here to lift the curtain from the crimes of this group and want to tell people what they are supposed to do about this matter.”(1)

According to another narration, she said, “I came here to arm the soldiers and with their help punish Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**’s enemies.”

Both of them left A'ishah and went to Talhah and al-Zubayr and asked them, “Why have you come here?” They replied, “For vengeance of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**’s blood.” The governor’s representatives asked, “Didn’t you make allegiance with Ali?” They replied, “Our allegiance was due to the fear of Malik al-Ashtar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**’s sword.” Then the representatives returned to the governor and informed him about the objective of the allegiance-breakers. The Imam

(1) *Tarikh al-Tabri* 5/174.

(ʿa) decided to prevent their entry near Basra with the help of mobilized forces. Announcers declared in the city and its surroundings and invited people to gather in the mosque. The governor's spokesman hid his identity and introduced himself as an individual from Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** belonging to the Qays tribe and said, "If this group says that they came to Basra for fear of their lives, they are saying something baseless; because they were in the immunity of God' House where even birds flying over the sky are immune and safe. If they came to take the vengeance for Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s blood, Uthman's killers aren't in Basra that they are coming to get them. O people! It is required from you to rise against them and force them to return to the same place from where they came."

At that moment, a man named al-Aswad stood up and said, "They don't consider us Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s killers; instead, they have come here to seek our help to take vengeance for Uthman's blood." Although these words were opposed by a majority, this incident indicated that Talhah and al-Zubayr, too, possessed supporters in Basra.

The caravan started moving towards Basra and Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Hunayf, too, started moving to prevent and resist their entrance, and in a region named al-Mirbad, they encountered each other. Soldiers of Talhah and al-Zubayr were upon the right hand of the region while Uthman ibn Hunayf and his companions were upon the left hand. Talhah and al-Zubayr talked about Uthman's virtues and his being an innocent and oppressed person, but the governor's companions claimed both of them as liars and the conflict between the opponents increased, but even a small fissure didn't appear among Uthman's companions. When A'ishah saw this situation, she started talking as follows, "People continuously had grievances against Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s close officials and reported the matter to us. We reviewed it and found him innocent, righteous and loyal and found the reporters liars and fraudulent. The rebels attacked his home and spilled his blood without any reason in the inviolable month. Know that what is worthy for you and isn't worthy for other than you is to arrest his killers and execute God's command against them." Then she recited this Quranic verse: "Hast thou not seen those who have received the Scripture invoke the Scripture of God (in their disputes) that it may judge between them. [3:23]"

A'ishah's speech developed a fissure among the companions of the

governor. A group testified her words while a group opposed them, and throwing of dust and stones against each other started among Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s united front. At this moment, A'ishah left al-Mirbad with the intention of going towards another point, while the split was controlling Uthman's companions and ultimately, a group amongst them joined the renegades.

Impeachment of the renegades

A man from the Banu-Saʿd tribe impeached A'ishah, saying, "Killing Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was easier for us than your exit from home and mounting upon this damned camel. God has provided for you a covering, veil of dignity and prestige,(1) but you sheered off the veil of your dignity and destroyed your prestige with your own hands. If you have come of your own will, then return right from here; and if you have come with reluctance, seek my help."

Another youth from the same tribe looked at al-Zubayr and Talhah and said, "Zubayr, you were considered the Prophet's supporter; Talhah, you saved God's Prophet (s) from injury with your hands. I see your *mother* has accompanied you. Did you bring your own wives with you?" They replied, "No," and he said, "At this moment, I depart from you," and said some poetic verses.(2)

At this moment, Hukaym ibn Jabalah with his companions arose for the help of Imam's governor and an intense fight took place between him and the supporters of Talhah and al-Zubayr. In order to separate both opposite groups, A'ishah ordered them to leave that point and move to the graveyard of Banu-Mazin. When they arrived there, the darkness of night created a distance between the two groups and the governor decided to return to the city. A'ishah's companions, at night, assembled at the house of salaries and prepared for the fighting. The following day, Hukaym attacked them and a bloody war took place between the opponents and a number from both the groups were killed and injured.

Interim peace between the two groups

Up to this point, historians wrote unanimously about the incident in a

(1) *"And stay in your houses. Adorn not yourselves with the adornment of the Time of Ignorance.* [33:33]"

(2) *Tarikh al-Tabri* 3/482; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh* 3/213-4.

manner as it was described above. The difference is in the later event being narrated; how these two opposing groups reached an agreement to stop fighting and wait for another incident. Here, al-Tabari, following Ibn al-Athir, wrote the matter in two forms. The second form is more realistic, but we are going to describe both forms here.

Religious inquiry of Talhah and al-Zubayr's allegiance

Al-Tabari wrote, "The opponents agreed to write a letter to the people of Medina in which a religious opinion should be sought about the allegiance of Talhah and al-Zubayr with Ali (ʿa). If the people of Medina witnessed that their allegiance was of their freewill and freedom, both of them should be returned from this place to Medina and not interfere with Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Hunayf. If they witnessed that their allegiance was due to fear and reluctance, then Uthman should leave Basra; and the governor's place, the public treasury, and whatever belonged to the government should be handed over to Talhah and al-Zubayr.

Al-Tabari quoted the content of the peace-treaty and noted that Kaʿb ibn Sur took it and went to Medina. On Friday, in the mosque the message of the people of Basra was heard by the people of Medina. Except for one person, named Usamah, no one replied to him. Usamah said, "Their allegiance wasn't with their freewill; rather, it was due to force and reluctance." At this moment, people rushed to attack him, and if some people, like Suhayb and Muhammad ibn Maslamah, hadn't rescued him, his blood would have been spilled. Kaʿb reported the incident of the Mosque in Medina which resulted in Talhah and al-Zubayr's sending a message to Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Hunayf to quit the governor's place because it had been proved that their allegiance wasn't due to their freewill and freedom.

The peace and compromise on this basis seems quite unlikely and this narration is far from truth, because of the following matters:

1. Its narrator is Sayf ibn Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** whom researchers don't consider righteous and truthful, but unfortunately, al-Tabari filled his book of history with his quotations.

2. Travelling the path from Basra to Medina requires much time and the renegades knew that the Imam (ʿa) had already left Medina to pursue them. Therefore, it wasn't expedient for them, with their being aware of such a

danger at their back, to surrender to such a condition and not take action to occupy the city and keep waiting for reply from Medina.

3. One who would accept that their allegiance was given due to fear and with reluctance could only be Sayf ibn Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, an opponent of the Imam's allegiance.

4. The most shinning testimony, refuting their allegiance was due to reluctance, was that a group like Sa'd ibn Abi-Waqqas**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Abdullah ibn Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Usamah and Hassan refused to make allegiance and separated themselves from everything, while no one created any inconvenience for them. If Talhah and al-Zubayr weren't interested, they could have followed the example of the others as mentioned above. Therefore, when the Imam ('a) learned about this matter, he said about al-Zubayr, "He imagines that he has made allegiance with his hand while his heart was against it. Anyway, in every condition he has admitted about his allegiance and claims that in esoteric essence he was against it. He should bring a witness for this matter and in case he fails to do so, his allegiance is still valid and he is supposed to obey me."(1)

Later on, after they were killed, Imam Ali ('a)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** explained their situation, "O God, Talhah and al-Zubayr cut off their bonds with me, oppressed me and broke their allegiance with me, and encouraged the people to rebel against me. O God! Whatever they have taken control over, make me conquer it; whatever they have ignited, don't make it steadfast; and punish them for whatever they have committed and whatever desires they carry in their minds. I gave them an opportunity to return to the allegiance which they had made with me earlier, but they showed ungratefulness and thus lost the prosperity of both worlds."(2)

Consultation with Imam Ali*Error! Bookmark not defined.*

The other form of agreement was that Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Hunayf told them that he had been appointed by Ali ('a) and could not accept their demands without a letter to him and asking his opinion regarding the situation.

"The opponents agreed that Uthman ibn Hunayf should remain in his position and the governor's place and public treasury should remain in his

(1) *Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.**, sermon 8.

(2) *Ibid.* sermon 133.

hands and that Talhah and al-Zubayr can dismount wherever they pleased until news arrives from Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. If the Imam reached a compromise, then nothing would happen; otherwise, everyone would be free to choose whatever path and method he would like to follow. They wrote this agreement and took witnesses from both groups."[1]

This narration appears to be more realistic. The chiefs of the renegades agreed to this agreement superficially. They decided to inflict a surprise night attack during the first available opportunity and occupy the governor's place by removing Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Hunayf. It is written that A'ishah wrote a letter to Zayd ibn Sawhan calling him her own son and requested him to either join her group or remain neutral but not help Ali. Zayd wrote back, "Peace of God be with the *mother of the believers*! She has been commanded to sit in her own home and we have been commanded to participate in fights. She has renounced her duty and invites me to perform her duty (i.e. to sit at home)! On the other hand, what we are supposed to do she has already rebelled against and wants to prevent us from discharging our duty."

Ibn Abi'l-Hadid**Error! Bookmark not defined.** narrated that the chief of the renegades wrote letters to chiefs of a few tribes and succeeded in getting the support of some of them, like the Azd, the Banu-Dabbah and the Qays ibn Ghaylan tribes. On the other hand, other tribes remained loyal to Imam Ali (ʿa).

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah* 1/64.

THE BLOODY COUP D'ETAT

It was under these circumstances that the chiefs of the renegades realized that they possessed sufficient power and it was soon after the dispatch of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s letter that in a cold night they waged a severe attack upon the mosque and the governor's place, and by killing the guards of the mosque, the governor's place and the prison, positioned themselves in the most strategic points of the city, and then each one of them started delivering speeches.

Talhah, while praising the murdered caliph, said, "The caliph committed sins but repented thereafter. We wanted to reprimand him but the stupid people dominated us and killed him."

When his words reached this point, people opened their lips to complain and said, "The letters which we received from you have a different content than this. You had invited us to rebel against the caliph."

At that moment, al-Zubayr stood up and, in order to exonerate him, said, "No such letters have been received by you from me."

At this moment, a person from the Abd al-Qays**Error! Bookmark not defined.** tribe stood up and described the story of the four caliphs and the result of his words was that the appointment of all four caliphs was accomplished through the Emigrants and Helpers, and even the least consultation wasn't done with us until you made allegiance with Ali without consulting us. Now what do you have against him? Did he allocate wealth for himself? Did he speak other than the truth? Did he commit an offence? If none of the above has been done, why did you rebel against him?"

His powerful and firm logic aroused the wrath of the world-seekers and they wanted to kill him but his tribe prevented them. The next day, they surrounded him and together with seventy other people who had arisen for his support killed them. They then took control of affairs from the leading of prayers to the public treasury in their own hands and were able to accomplish some of their desires.

Story of the governor

The steadfastness shown by the governor while defending his position and situation severely agitated the renegades. When they took hold of him, they beat him with their fists and feet and tortured him by plucking the hairs of

his head and beard. Then, they argued between themselves about killing him, but eventually decided to free him, because they were scared that his brother Sahl in Medina might take severe revenge. Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Hunayf left Basra to meet Imam Ali (ʿa) who, upon seeing him in that condition said to him in jest, "You left us as old man and now have returned young!" Uthman explained the incident to the Imam (ʿa).

The number of people who were killed in this coup-d'état has been quoted differently. Al-Tabari and Ibn al-Athir said that the number of the killed was forty, but Ibn Abi'l-Hadid quoted their number as seventy, and Abu-Makhnaf said that four hundred people were killed. It is tragic that the renegades approached the guards of the mosque, the governor's place and the prison through deceit and trickery and then beheaded them in a horrible manner.

Hukaym's uprising

Meanwhile, when Hukaym ibn Jabalah learnt about the tragic and horrible news of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s removal and the killing of his guards in a bizarre tragedy, he became very sad and with three hundred people from the Abd al-Qays**Error! Bookmark not defined.** tribe decided to fight with them. He organized his forces into four battalions and, accompanied by his three brothers as commanders, attacked the renegades, who asked A'ishah to ride on the camel for the first time and, through her, were able to incline people's sentiments towards them. Therefore, the day of Hukaym's uprising is named as the Minor Day of the Camel.

During this combat, all three hundred companions of Hukaym and his brothers were killed, and the leadership of Basra, without any obstruction, came under the disposal of Talhah and al-Zubayr. Yet, since both of them desired the government and control over the ruling affairs, they had serious arguments with each other about leading the prayers, because it was an indication of their political leadership. When A'ishah learned about their dispute, she dismissed both of them and appointed their sons. Thus, one day, Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and the next day Muhammad ibn Talhah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** led the prayers respectively.

When they opened the door of the house of the public treasury and their eyes fell upon the huge wealth of Muslims, al-Zubayr quoted this Quranic verse: "*God promiseth you much booty that you will capture and hath*

given you this in advance. [48:20]"

He then said, "We are more worthy and deserving for this wealth than the people of Basra." Thus, they confiscated the entire wealth and when the Imam (ʿa) retook control of Basra in his own hand, he returned it back into the public treasury.

Imam Ali learns about the coup-d'état

Al-Rabadhah is the land of memories. The Imam (ʿa) was familiar with this region for a long time, especially since the day when it turned into a place of exile for his most sincere companions Abu-Dharr, the great distinguished companion of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who was exiled on this land for the crime of protesting against the discrimination and extravagance of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. After a passage of years, God directed Ali (ʿa) towards this land in order to gather forces to arrest the renegades. The Imam (ʿa) was at this place when he received the unpleasant news of the coup-d'état and learned that Talhah and al-Zubayr had entered Basra, killed the guards of the mosque, public treasury and governor's place, spilled the blood of hundreds of people, and dominated the city after severely beating his governor.

At this stage, the Imam's intention was to get help from the people of Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to crush the rebellion, because the only bunker that was left in the land of Iraq for him was Kufa and the tribes of its surrounding areas. The governor of Kufa was the big obstruction in this path, because he regarded any sort of uprising as sedition and prevented people from helping the Imam (ʿa). Abu-Musa was the governor of Kufa before the allegiance of the Emigrants and Helpers with the Imam (ʿa) and, with Malik al-Ashtar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s suggestion, was reinstated in his position. Apart from that, Malik al-Ashtar's view was that he was quite different from the other**Error! Bookmark not defined.** governors because of his strictness and discipline, and he maintained a good record of preserving the public treasury without plundering it or being extravagant.

The Imam (ʿa) thought that it was an option to dispatch personalities to Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and write letters to Abu-Musa and the people of Kufa to prepare the ground for dispatching fighters for his help; otherwise, he would have to think of dismissing the governor and replacing him with someone else. Here are the details of the efforts that the Imam (ʿa) made in this matter:

Dispatch of Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr*Error! Bookmark not defined.*

Imam Ali (ʿa) dispatched Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Muhammad ibn Jaʿfar together with a letter **Error! Bookmark not defined.**to be read loudly in an assembly of the people of Kufa so that they could hear him seeking help, but the stubbornness of Abu-Musa made the efforts of those two individuals fruitless. When the people resorted to Abu-Musa for advice, he said, "Either choose sitting at home for the Hereafter or rising for the world." Therefore, the Imam's representatives left Kufa and returned**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and informed him about the situation.

Dispatch of Ibn Abbas and Malik al-Ashtar*Error! Bookmark not defined.*

The Imam (ʿa) was trying not to create a dead end situation in this matter too, like other matters, and as much as possible didn't want to take a harsh action. Therefore, he thought that it was prudent to dispatch two more distinguished personalities like Ibn Abbas and Malik al-Ashtar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** in order to resolve the problem through negotiations. He said to al-Ashtar, "Whatever you have done so far has produced bad results; therefore, try to improve things." These persons entered Kufa and held discussions with Abu-Musa. This time, too, Abu-Musa put his words differently and said to them, "This is a rebellion in which a person dreaming is better than one awake, one awake is better than one sitting, one sitting is better than one standing, one standing is better than one mounted and one mounted is better than one fighting." Then he added, "Put your swords inside their sheaths..."

This time, too, the representative of the Imam (ʿa) returned empty-handed, disappointed and informed him about Abu-Musa's stubbornness and his stand in this matter.

Dispatch of Imam al-Hasan and Ammar*Error! Bookmark not defined.* ***ibn Yasir***

This time, the Imam (ʿa) decided to seek the help of the most superior personalities and worthiest persons, his own elder son Imam al-Hasan (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Yasir. The first was the son of the Holy Prophet's daughter, who has been under her love and care, and the second was the vanguard of Islam, and Muslims had heard lot about his praise from Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. These two respected persons

entered Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** with the Imam's letter. First, Imam al-Hasan (ʿa) read the Imam's letter containing the following content: "This letter is from the servant and creature of God, Ali, Commander of the Faithful, to the people of Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who are the leaders of supporters(1) and respectable Arabs. After praising God and invoking His blessing upon the Holy Prophet (s),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** I want to throw light on the event of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and make the whole affair as clear as if you were present on the occasion and witnessing affairs with your own eyes. People were dissatisfied with him and were accusing and blaming him. Out of the Emigrants, I was the only person who wanted to appease and pacify people and I didn't want to participate in the activities of those angered people.

Talhah and al-Zubayr were instigating the masses in such a way that the least they said was the worst that could be alleged about Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. Their whispering campaign was deadlier than the loudest propaganda which could be carried on. A'ishah also exhibited extreme annoyance and anger against Uthman. Under such conditions, some persons resolved to kill him and they did. Then, everybody, friend and foes alike, came to me and took the oath of allegiance with me. This was done without any desire, instigation, inducement, persuasion or compulsion and force on my part. They came to me of their own freewill, without hesitation, with pleasure, ecstasy and joy.

Let it be known to you that the people of Medina, to which the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** had migrated, is being deserted by its inhabitants. They are leaving it. It is seething with discontent and rebellion. Sedition has started against the governor. I want you to come to the help of your caliph to fight against his enemies."(2)

After reading the Imam's letter, the time arrived when they should talk and enlighten the mind of the people. When the Imam's son started speaking, all eyes were fixed upon him and listeners prayed with their lips and asked God to make his logic more steadfast. Imam al-Hasan (ʿa),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** resting upon a lance, started speaking, "O

(1) In the letter of the Imam (ʿa) only *Jabhat al-Ansar* has been written. *Jabhah* means a group or backing, and what is meant here by *Ansar* is the same supporters, not helpers against immigrants, because before the immigration of Imam Ali (ʿa) to Kufah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** this city wasn't a center of the Helpers.

(2) *Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.**, letter 1.

People! We came to invite you to the Book of God, traditions of the Prophet (s) and the most superior, most steadfast and most righteous person for the allegiance of Muslims. We are inviting you to one whom the Holy Quran hasn't criticized, who has not denied his traditions, and in faith he possess two bonds with him; faith and relationship. He has superiority amongst all and he never left him alone. The day when people scattered from around the Prophet, God considered his help to be sufficient to save his life and he prayed with the Prophet (s) while others were polytheists.

O People! Such a person seeks your help, invites your to truth, wants your backing to rise up against the group who has broken their allegiance, killed his righteous companions and plundered his public treasury. Arise! May God's blessing be upon you, move towards him, encourage good and prohibit evil, and whatever the righteous people accumulate, you should also try to accumulate it."

Ibn Abi'l-Hadid**Error! Bookmark not defined.** has quoted two speeches of Imam al-Hasan (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** from the famous historian Abu-Mikhnaf, both of which motivated the sentiments miraculously. When the speech of Imam al-Hasan (ʿa) ended, Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Yasir rose and praised God, invoked His blessings upon the Prophet (s), and said, "O People! The brother and cousin of the Prophet (s) seeks your help for the religion of God. You are blessed to have an Imam who doesn't perform any wrong, an intellectual who doesn't need any education, the most powerful man who is never scared, and no one could be compared to his precedence to defending Islam. If you encountered him face to face, he would reveal reality to you."

These speeches awakened the hearts and conscience of the people, and whatever the simple-minded governor had woven earlier quickly became loosened. When Zayd ibn Sawhan read A'ishah's letter before the people of Kufa,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** all of them were astonished. She had written to Zayd to sit in his own home and not help Ali. Zayd after reciting the letter cried, "O People! Be aware that the duty of the *mother of the believers* is to sit in her home and my duty is to fight in the battlefield. Right now, she invites us to act in accordance with her duty and has taken our duty upon her own shoulders!"

These happenings turned the situation in favor of Imam Ali (ʿa) and groups became ready to help him and, approximately, twelve thousand people left their homes and lives in order to accompany the Imam (ʿa).

Abu'l-Tufayl said, "The Imam (ʿa) said to me that the numbers of

supporters who are coming from Kufa to him is twelve thousand and one. After their arrival, I counted them and they were as exactly as he told."[1]

However, Shaykh al-Mufid narrated the number of soldiers who rushed from Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to the Imam (ʿa) as six thousand and six hundred. He thus wrote, "The Imam (ʿa) told Ibn Abbas that within the period of two days, the mentioned number would come to him and kill Talhah and al-Zubayr. Ibn Abbas said that when he researched the number of soldiers, he was told that they were six thousand and six hundred."[2]

Abu-Musa's fruitless efforts

Abu-Musa was very upset because of the situation turning completely against his wishes, and, looking to Ammar,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** said to the people, "I have heard from the Prophet that soon sedition would happen in which the sitting person would be better than the standing; both of them better than the mounted person; and, God has made forbidden to us to shed and rob our blood and wealth."

Ammar,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who possessed a spirit of protesting, replied, "Yes, the Prophet intended this, especially for you and your sitting, which is better than your standing, but not for others."[3]

One must ponder over the abovementioned narration. How can it be known that the Prophet (s) meant the Sedition of the Camel exclusively? Was it not obligatory upon all Muslims to prevent a group of transgressors who, for the love of power, cut off the heads of four hundred people like sheep? After the death of Holy Prophet (s), plenty of events occurred, starting with the Saqifah and up to slaying Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. Why was the narration of the Holy Prophet (s) not valid for them? If we turn the pages of history and review conditions from the year 11 to 35 A.H., we will find some of those incidents quite horrible and tragic. Is it possible to simply pass by the bitter and tragic incident of Malik ibn Nuwayrah? Can the incidents during the third caliph's rule, including torture, severe beating, and exiling of the righteous, be forgotten? Why can this narration not be valid for the coming to power by Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Marwan and Abd al-Malik?

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(1) Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* 14/11-14; *Tarikh al-Tabri* 3/499-500.

(2) Shaykh al-Mufid, *al-Jamal*, page 157.

(3) *Tarikh al-Tabri* 3/498.

In principle, the Holy Quran comprises many verses commanding of obedience to the religious and divinely commissioned rulers, such as the following:

"*O ye who believe! Obey God, and obey the messenger and those of you who are in authority.* [4:59]"

Obedience to a ruler appointed and elected by the Helpers and Emigrants is a religious duty about which no two Muslims disagree. Abu-Musa, too, recognized the Imam (ʿa) as the official ruler of Muslims, ***Error! Bookmark not defined.***because he accepted his order of reinstatement on the position of governor of Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and after that whatever responsibilities he discharged, he did so as an official of Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. On this basis, he shouldn't have stood up against the clear verse of the Holy Quran by simply presenting a brief narration as a document.

Abu-Musa dismissed

The repeated dispatching of representatives and their efforts being rendered fruitless resulted in the Imam's decision to dismiss Abu-Musa from his position as the governor of Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. He wrote a letter to Abu-Musa and officially dismissed him and replaced him with Qaradhah ibn Kaʿb. Following is the content of the Imam's letter:

"I see it expedient that you should resign from this position, since God sees you unqualified for it and He doesn't want me to tolerate your disobedience. I have dispatched al-Hasan ibn Ali and Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Yasir to lead people to me and appointed Qaradhah ibn Kaʿb as the governor of the city. Quit my administration as a reprimanded and dismissed person."

The content of the letter was circulated in the city and it wasn't too long that Malik al-Ashtar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, who had already been dispatched to Kufa upon his own request, took control of the governor's place and handed it over to the new governor and Abu-Musa left."

IMAM ALI'S MARCH FROM DHI-QAR TO BASRA

Imam Ali (ʿa) **Error! Bookmark not defined.**left Dhi-Qar for Basra with strong military power. Like the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, before the start of fighting, he wanted to complete the argument against his opponents even though the reality was clear to them. He sent separate letters to Talhah, al-Zubayr and A'ishah and in each letter deplored their action and seriously condemned the killing of the guards of the governor's place and public treasury and reprimanded them strongly for the oppression to which they subjected Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Hunayf. The Imam (ʿa) dispatched all three letters through Saʿsaʿah ibn Sawhan, who said, "I first met Talhah and gave him the letter of the Imam (ʿa). having read it, he said, 'A war has put serious pressure upon Ali, but does he show any sign of flexibility?' Then, I met al-Zubayr and found him softer than Talhah. Then I gave A'ishah the letter and found her more prepared to create sedition and to wage war as compared to the others. She said to me, 'I rose to **Error! Bookmark not defined.**avenge Uthman and, by God, I am going to accomplish this task.'

Before the Imam's entrance into Basra, I met him and he asked me what the news was behind my back. I replied, 'I saw that the groups don't want anything except war.' He expressed, 'I seek God's help."[1]

When Imam Ali (ʿa) was informed about the absolute determination of those people, he called Ibn Abbas and said, "Meet these three persons, and because of their making an allegiance with me, they are bound to obey me; therefore, protest with them."

When he met Talhah and reminded him of his allegiance with the Imam (ʿa), Talhah replied, "I made allegiance while the sword was upon my head." Ibn Abbas said, "I saw that you made allegiance with complete freedom; the proof is that at the time of allegiance, Ali said to you that if you want, he would make allegiance with you, but you refused and insisted on paying homage to him."

Talhah said, "It is true that Ali said such words, but at that moment the groups of people had already made allegiance with him and I didn't have an option to oppose him... We are seeking vengeance for Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s blood; if your cousin desires to prevent

(1) Shaykh al-Mufid, *al-Jamal*, page 167.

spilling of Muslim's blood, he should hand over Uthman's killers and resign from caliphate so that this issue can be decided by a council that would select the caliph it likes; otherwise, my gift for him is this sword."

Ibn Abbas utilized this opportunity to roll the curtain a little higher and said, "You remember that you besieged Uthman's**Error! Bookmark not defined.** home for ten complete days and prevented entry of water inside his home; and when Ali held discussions with you to allow the entry of water, you didn't approve it; and when the Egyptians witnessed such resistance, they entered in his home and killed him. Then, at that moment, people saw the shining past performance and clear distinctions of one who had a close relationship with the Holy Prophet (s). They made allegiance with him and you, without any compulsion and force, did the same. At present, you have broken it. How strange it is that during the three previous caliphates, you were calm and silent, but when the chance went to Ali, you just seem to be extremely agitated. By God, Ali is not lesser than you. Regarding your demand for Uthman's killers, you know them better than anybody else and also know that Ali isn't scared of the sword."

Though ashamed within his inner self, he terminated the discussion and said, "Ibn Abbas, stop this debate!" Ibn Abbas related: I rushed towards Ali ('a) and reported the result of my negotiations. He ordered me to negotiate with A'ishah too and tell her: To lead an army isn't the duty of a women and you were never assigned this task, but through this act, you have rebelled, accompanied others, come to Basra, killed Muslims and forced the government employee to escape, opened the gate, and regarded the spilling of Muslim blood as permissible. It is better if you remind yourself that you were the bitterest enemy of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

I conveyed the Imam's message to A'ishah who replied, "Your cousin thinks that he has dominated over the lands. By God, if he has things in his hand, we have more than that in ours." I said, "For Ali, there are privileges and past distinctions in Islam and he has suffered a lot in this path." She said, "Talhah, too, has suffered a lot of pains in the War of Uhud." I said, "I don't imagine that amongst the companions of the Prophet (s) there is any one who has suffered more in the path of Islam than Ali." At this moment, A'ishah entered through the gate of justice and said, "Ali, other than this, possesses other distinctions as well." I, seizing the opportunity, said, "I adjure you by God to stop spilling the blood of Muslims." She replied, "The blood of Muslim shall continue to be spilled until Ali and his companions kill themselves."

Having heard this logic, I smiled and said, “Ali is accompanied by farsighted statesmen who will spill their own blood in this path.” Then I left her presence.

Ali (ʿa) had recommended my talking to al-Zubayr and, as far as possible, to meet him alone, without his son Abdullah. I tried to find him alone but failed. The third time I saw him alone, he ordered his servant not to allow anyone inside. I opened the dialogue. First, I noticed that he was angered, but slowly, I was able to appease him. When his servant noticed the change in his behavior, he immediately informed his son Abdullah, and since he entered in the assembly, I stopped talking. Al-Zubayr’s son, in order to justify his father’s uprising, mentioned Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**’s blood and its approval by A'ishah. Replying, I said, “The blood of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** is upon your father’s neck; either he killed him or at least he didn’t help him. The approval of A'ishah isn’t a proof of his being steadfast. He brought her outside her home while the Prophet had warned her, saying, ‘A'ishah! Beware of the day that dogs of al-Haw'ab bark upon you.’” Finally, I said to al-Zubayr, “By God, I counted you as one of the Hashemites. You are the son of Safiyyah, Abu-Talib’s sister, and you are the cousin of Ali. Since your son Abdullah has become young, he has cut off the bonds of kinship.”

However, from the words of Imam Ali (ʿa) in *Nahj al-Balaghah*,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** it can be seen that he was completely disappointed with the discussions with Talhah and had instructed Ibn Abbas to only meet al-Zubayr and negotiate with him. Here are the eloquent words of the Imam (ʿa) about this matter, “Don’t meet Talhah; he isn’t open to conviction and reasoning. He is arrogant and behaves like a bull with raised head and horns tilted towards his back. He is trying to lead an illiterate, unruly and ungodly mob believing it to be docile and obedient. But you must meet al-Zubayr, for he is reasonable and considerate. Tell him that you have a message from your cousin: You have accepted me in Hijaz as the Prophet’s successor and your leader, but in Iraq you refuse to recognize my rights. What has made you turn back upon your words and deeds?”(1)

Dispatch of al-Qaʿqaʿ ibn Amr*Error! Bookmark not defined.*

Al-Qaʿqaʿ**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, a companion of the Holy Prophet (s),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was a resident of

(1) *Nahl al-Balaghah*, sermon 31.

Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and he possessed a special prestige within his tribe. With the order of the Imam (ʿa), he was assigned to meet Talhah and al-Zubayr. The content of his negotiations have been quoted by al-Tabari and Ibn al-Athir. He was able to dominate their thoughts with a special logic and make them ready for peace with the Imam (ʿa). When he returned and informed him about the result of his negotiations, the Imam (ʿa) was astonished by their softening.

At this moment, a group of people of Basra came to the Imam's garrison to be informed about his point of view as well as of their brothers from Kufa who had accompanied him. After their return to Basra, the Imam (ʿa) delivered a speech to his soldiers and then moved from that region and dismounted at a place called Zawiyah. Talhah, al-Zubayr and A'ishah too moved from their position and dismounted at a place that later on became Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad's center and were placed facing the Imam's army.

Calmness dominated both armies. The Imam (ʿa) tried to resolve the issue of the rebels through negotiations. He sent the message that if they were still agreed on their words given to al-Qaʿqaʿ, in that case exchange of ideas could be continued. But indicators pointed out that the issue couldn't be resolved through political negotiations and in order to quench the sedition, arms would have to be used.

Imam Ali's attempt to reduce the troops of the enemy

Al-Ahnaf ibn Malik, besides being the chief of his tribe, possessed significant influence upon the surrounding tribes. During the siege of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s house, he was in Medina and had asked both Talhah and al-Zubayr whom he should make allegiance with after Uthman and both of them had pointed towards the Imam (ʿa). When al-Ahnaf returned from Hajj and found Uthman killed, he made allegiance with the Imam (ʿa) and returned to Basra. When he saw Talhah and al-Zubayr's breaking their allegiance, he was astonished. He was invited by A'ishah to help them but he refused and said, "I have made allegiance with Ali with the approval of those two persons and I would never wage a war with the cousin of the Prophet (s). I would rather prefer to remain neutral." Due to this reason, he came to see the Imam (ʿa) and said, "My tribes say that if Ali becomes victorious, he will kill men and take women as prisoners of war," but the Imam (ʿa) answered, "They shouldn't be scared by one like me. This act is permissible only for those who have turned their back from Islam and have become infidels, while this group is Muslim." Having heard this sentence, al-Ahnaf said, "Let us select one of

these two options; either I fight in your company or save you from the evil of ten thousand swordsmen." The Imam (ʿa) said, "It is better that you remain loyal upon your promise of remaining neutral." Because of his influence, al-Ahnaf prevented all of them from participating in the war. When the Imam (ʿa) became victorious, all of them entered through the path of allegiance and joined him.

Imam Ali meets Talhah and al-Zubayr

In the month of Jumada II, 36 A.H., the Imam (ʿa) met Talhah and al-Zubayr standing between the two armies, so close that the hairs of their horses were touching each other. The Imam (ʿa) first spoke with Talhah and then with al-Zubayr: "You have accumulated arsenal, foot and mounted soldiers. If you have any argument and reason, let me know; otherwise, practice piety, fear God's opposition and don't act like that woman who turns her woven thread into cotton. Was I not your brother? Did I not regard your blood as forbidden? Did you not regard my blood as forbidden? Have I done something that, right now, you consider my blood as permissible?"

Talhah: "You motivated people for Uthman's murder."

The Imam (ʿa): "If I have committed such an act, on the Day of Judgment God will punish people for their deeds and the truth will become explicit for everyone. O Talhah! Did you not demand Uthman's blood? May God curse Uthman's killers! You have brought the wife of the Prophet (s) in order to fight under her shadow, while you have placed your own wife in your home. Did you not make allegiance with me?"

Talhah: "I made allegiance when the sword was upon my head."

Then the Imam (ʿa) turned to al-Zubayr and said, "What is the reason for this rebellion?"

Al-Zubayr: "I don't consider you worthier than I am in assuming this post."

The Imam (ʿa): "Am I not worthy of assuming it?" Al-Zubayr, in the council of six persons had voted for the Imam. "I considered you as one of the family of Abd al-Muttalib until your son Abdullah became mature and created a separation between us. Do you remember the day when the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was passing through the tribe of Bani-Ghanam? He (s) looked at me and laughed and I too laughed. You said to the Prophet (s) that Ali doesn't quit his humor and the Prophet (s) said to you: By God, O al-Zubayr, you will fight with him and in that

case, you will be an oppressor."

Al-Zubayr: "It is true, and if I had remembered this incident earlier, I wouldn't have taken this course. By God, I would never fight with you."

Al-Zubayr was affected by the Imam's words; so, he returned to A'ishah and informed her about the matter. When his son Abdullah learned about his father's decision, he started to reprimand him and said, "You have accumulated these two groups here and now that one of them has become powerful you want to leave the other one! By God, you are scared of the swords that Ali has raised because you know that they are carried by the shoulders of brave people."

Al-Zubayr replied, "I have taken an oath not to fight with Ali. What I should do now?"

Abdullah replied, "The solution is to pay a ransom. You better free a slave." For this reason, al-Zubayr freed his slave named Makhul.

This event indicates how superficial al-Zubayr's point of view about the incident was. He undertook an oath not to fight with Ali (ʿa) when he reminded him of a tradition from the Holy Prophet (s).**Error! Bookmark not defined.** Then, after being motivated by his son, regarded the Prophet's word as unseen, and by paying ransom, trampled his own oath. The situation dictated a military encounter; therefore, the renegades decided to strengthen their forces.

Al-Ahnaf's decision was a heavy blow upon the renegades. Notwithstanding this, they fixed their eyes upon the Judge of Basra, Kaʿb ibn Sur,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** but he, too, refused to join the forces of the rebels. When they witnessed his refusal, they decided to have a meeting with him, but he refused to meet them. Then they had no other alternative than to persuade A'ishah to go and visit him. She was mounted upon a horse and a group of people of Basra surrounded her mount. She went to the residence of the judge, who was the elder of the Azd tribe and held a high position among the people of Yemen, and asked permission to enter. She was given permission; so, she asked him the reason for his refusal and he replied, "There is no need for me to enter in this sedition." A'ishah said, "O my son! Arise, for I see things that you can't see." She meant to angels who have arrived for the help of *believers*; that is, the rebels! She added, "I am afraid of God Who is severe in punishment." And in this manner, she was able to convince the judge to join them.

Abdullah's speech and Imam al-Hasan's reply*Error! Bookmark not defined.*

Having organized the army, al-Zubayr's son delivered a speech, which was circulated amongst the Imam's supporters. At this moment, Imam al-Hasan (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** delivered a sermon. Then a competent poet compiled verses in the praise of Imam Ali's son that excited the sentiments of people present in the assembly. The sermon of Imam al-Hasan (ʿa) and the verses of the poet proved to be very effective among the army of the renegades, because the son of the Holy Prophet's daughter exposed Talhah's stand on Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. Then, Talhah delivered a speech in which he called the tribes who were the followers of Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** hypocrites.

Talhah's words upon the relatives of those who were in his army were considered very serious. Suddenly, a man rose and said, "O Talhah! Do you speak obscene words for the tribes of Mudhar, Rabiʿah and Yemen? By God, they are from us and we are from them." Al-Zubayr's supporters tried to arrest him but the Banu-Asad tribe prevented his arrest. The incident didn't end here and another person rose and repeated his words. This incident clearly indicated that although Talhah was a man of war, he wasn't well-versed in the principles of politics.

Imam Ali's sermon*Error! Bookmark not defined.*

Imam Ali (ʿa) rose and addressed the forces of both sides, saying, "Talhah and al-Zubayr entered Basra while its residents were under obedience and allegiance to me. They invited them to rebel against me and whoever refused to obey them was executed. Everyone knows that they killed Hukaym ibn Jabalah and the guards of the public treasury and forced Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Hunayf to leave Basra with an extremely abominable face. Now that the veil has been removed from their faces, they have decided to declare war."

When the speech of Imam Ali (ʿa) ended, Hakim ibn Manaf praised the Imam (ʿa) in poetic verses composed by him and breathed a fresh spirit in the Imam's army. Two verses of his poem are:

Oh Abu'l-Hasan, you have awakened the sleeping,

Not everyone who is invited towards the truth, listens.

You have been bestowed with the best of all perfections,

And God blesses whoever He likes, or refuses.

Imam Ali (ʿa) gave an ultimatum to the rebels for three days, hoping that

they would give up their opposition. But when he became disappointed with them, he delivered a sermon to his supporters in which he described the tragic outcome of the rebels. When the Imam's sermon ended, Shaddad rose and in short sentences spoke about the distinctions of the holy progeny of the Holy Prophet (s): "When the offenders increased and the stubborn rebelled in opposition, we took shelter in the holy progeny of the Prophet (s). God made us respectful through their means and prevented us from deviation from His guidance. It is up to you, O people, to cling to their rope and move away from those who have deviated to the left or right and let them be drowned in the whirlpool of wretchedness."

Imam Ali's last argument*Error! Bookmark not defined.*

On Thursday, 10th of Jumada I, 36 A.H., Imam Ali (ʿa) moved within the lines of his army and said, "Don't hurry until I complete my argument with this group." Then, he gave a copy of the Holy Quran to Ibn Abbas and instructed, "Take this copy of the Quran, go to the chiefs of the rebels, and invite them to acting upon it. Ask Talhah and al-Zubayr why they have renounced their fealty to me. Tell them also that the Book of God will judge between me and them."

Ibn Abbas first went near al-Zubayr and gave him the Imam's message, but al-Zubayr replied, "My allegiance wasn't optional and I don't need the judgment of the Quran." Then, Ibn Abbas went to Talhah and said, "The Commander of the Faithful has asked why you broke the allegiance." And Talhah replied, "I want vengeance for Uthman's blood." Ibn Abbas said, "Uthman's son, Aban, is worthiest of all of you to seek vengeance." Talhah said, "He is weak and I am stronger than him." Ultimately, Ibn Abbas went to A'ishah and found her inside the howdah on the back of the camel lead by the judge of Basra, Kaʿb ibn Sur, and the people of the Azd and the Dabbah tribes encircling it. When A'ishah saw Ibn Abbas, she asked, "What have you come for? Go back and tell Ali that between us and him there is nothing except the sword."

Ibn Abbas returned to the Imam (ʿa) and informed him about the matter. The Imam (ʿa) wanted to complete the argument once more so that he should put his hand upon the clutch of his sword with clear reason. This time he said, "Who can take this copy of the Quran and go to that group to invite them to it? If they cut off his one hand, he should take it into his other hand; and if they cut off both hands, he should take it in his teeth."

A young man arose and said, "O Commander of the Faithful! I am ready."

The Imam (ʿa) once more repeated his words amongst his supporters and, except for the same young man, no one responded to him. Then he gave the copy of the Quran in the hands of that young man and said, “Present this Quran to this group and say that from the beginning until the end let this Book be a ruler and an arbitrator between you and us.”

With the command of the Imam (ʿa), the young man went to the enemy with the Quran. They cut both of his hands and he took the Book of God in his teeth until the last moment of his life. This incident made fighting certain and clearly indicated the position of the rebels. Imam Ali (ʿa) showed statesmanship and generosity and said before the attack, “I know that until Talhah and al-Zubayr don’t spill blood, they will not renounce their efforts, but still, don’t start fighting until they start it. If one escapes from among them, don’t follow him; don’t kill the wounded and don’t remove the enemy’s clothing from his body.”

THE FIERCE ATTACK BY IMAM ALI AND THE FALL OF THE CAMEL

Among the military commanders of the world, we don't know anyone who would give so much time to the enemy as was given by Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and be so calm and patient and postpone the war until the uproar and complaint of his own companions could be heard. Therefore, Imam Ali (ʿa) had no option but to organize the lines of his army and appoint commanders in the following manner:

Ibn Abbas was the commander-in-chief of the front lines; Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Yasir commander of the cavalry; and Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr**Error! Bookmark not defined.** as the commander of the infantry. After that, he appointed the standard-bearers of the Midhhaj, Hamadan, Kindah, Quzaʿah, Azad, Bakr, and Abd al-Qays tribes. The number of people who had been readied for combat under the Imam's banner reached sixteen thousand.

The renegades start the fight

While the Imam (ʿa) was still busy explaining the military commands to his soldiers, a shower of arrows by the enemy engulfed the Imam's garrison and some of his companions lost their lives, including an arrow that struck Budyal and killed him. Abdullah brought the dead body of his son near the Imam (ʿa) and said, "Should we still show patience and self-control until the enemy kills us one after another? By God, if your aim was to complete the argument, you have completed it." Abdullah's word made the Imam (ʿa) give orders to retaliate. He put on the coat of arms of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and mounted upon the horse that he had near him and stood between the battle lines of his companions. Qays ibn Saʿd, the most sincere companion of the Imam (ʿa), composed poetry on this occasion:

This flag that we have circled around is the same flag
Of the Prophet (s) when the Angel Gabriel came to our help.
For whom his helpers are but keepers of his mysteries,
For nothing will happen even if he doesn't have supporters.

The outstanding and well-organized army of Imam Ali (ʿa) created havoc in the cowards' army. They brought the camel that was carrying the camel's litter of A'ishah into the battlefield, whose rope was in Kaʿb ibn Sur, the

judge of Basra's hand, who had hung the scripture in his neck and the individuals from the Azd tribe had surrounded it. Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was in front of A'ishah and Marwan ibn al-Hakam was on her left side. The command of the army was in al-Zubayr's control, Talhah was the commander of the cavalry and Muhammad ibn Talhah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was the commander of the infantry.

The Imam (ʿa) handed over the banner to his son Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah and instructed him with the most superior military principles and said, "Remember, my son, that mountains may move away and leave their places, but, on no account, will you retreat or run away from the battle field. Be brave and resolute and offer your head in the service of God. Firmly entrench yourself (don't think of fleeing). Keep your eyes on the last line of your enemy's army (you must reach there after overthrowing the front rows. You must not overlook the movements of rear ranks and merely concentrate on the front lines). Remember that only God can help and should be trusted upon."(1)

When people asked Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah why the Imam (ʿa) dispatched him to the battlefield but didn't send al-Hasan and al-Husayn, he replied, "I am my father's hand and they are his eyes; he defends his eyes with his hand."

The Imam (ʿa) ordered a group that he named *al-Katibah al-Khadra'* whose members consisted of the Helpers and Emigrants, while al-Hasan and al-Husayn had encircled its surroundings, to attack the enemy's lines. He gave the banner in the hand of Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah and said, "Go ahead to the extent that you can see the camel's eye." The son of the Imam decided to move forward but the storm of arrows stopped him for a few moments so that the rain of arrows could slow down.

At this juncture, the Imam (ʿa) again ordered his son to attack but since he found him a little hesitant, he felt pity for him and took the banner from him. Holding his sword in his right hand and the banner in his left, he started to attack himself and moved forward into the heart of the army. The Imam's companions Ammar and**Error! Bookmark not defined.** Malik and his sons al-Hasan and al-Husayn said to him, "We can continue the attack and you may stop at this place," but the Imam (ʿa) neither answered nor looked to them; rather, he roared like a lion and all of his attention was

(1) *Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.**, sermon 11.

towards the enemy lines and he didn't find any one near him.

Then he again gave the banner to his son and started another attack and went into the heart of the army and killed whoever obstructed him. Seeing his valiant advancement, the enemy started fleeing and took shelter in surrounding areas. Then he returned and mended his sword by pressing it against his knees. At this moment, his companions surrounded him and swore to God that if he again attacked personally, because his getting killed would result in complete annihilation of Islam and, they added, we are here for you. The Imam (ʿa) replied, "I fight for the sake of God and want to seek His pleasure." Then he said to his son Muhammad, "Look! That is the way to attack." Muhammad replied, "Who could dare act like you, O Commander of the Faithful?"

At this moment, the Imam (ʿa) sent a message to Malik to attack the left side of the army that was commanded by Hilal. In this attack, Hilal, Kaʿb ibn Sur, who was holding the camel's rope in his hand, and Amr ibn al-Yathribi were killed. All the efforts of the rebellions were concentrated on the fact that A'ishah's camel should remain on its feet as a symbol of their resistance and steadfastness. Therefore, when the Imam's army attacked the camel, they defended it and seventy people amongst the rebels sacrificed their lives to protect it.

While heads were flying from necks, hands we being sheared off from bodies, hearts and intestines were coming out of stomachs, and in spite of that, all the rebels were firm and steadfast surrounding the camel. At that moment, Imam Ali (ʿa) cried, "Strike A'ishah's camel because it is the manifestation of the devil. Strike it; otherwise, the Arabs will be destroyed. Until this camel stands on its feet, swords will continue to rise and fall."(1)

He started reciting slogans: "O helpers of the community" and occasionally "They can't be the winners," which used to be raised by the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** when he fought the polytheists. Recital of these slogans caused an astonishing demoralization among the enemy's army, because it reminded them of the fighting of Muslims against polytheists. A'ishah too recited slogans in order to strengthen the morale of the army of the camel, "O my son, be steadfast and attack. I guarantee Paradise for you!"

Due to this slogan, a group surrounded her and moved forward to the extent that they reached within a few steps of Imam Ali's army. In order to

(1) *Ibid.* 1/257-67.

motivate her companions, A'ishah filled her fist with dust and throwing it towards the Imam's companions said, "Let your faces be blackened." In doing this, she copied the act of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who, in the Battle of Badr,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** filled his fist with dust, threw it upon enemy and said the same sentence, and God revealed the following verse upon him: "*And thou threwest not when thou didst throw, but God threw*. [8:17]"

Witnessing this act of A'ishah, Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** immediately replied, "When the Holy Prophet (s) did that, it was God Who backed him; but when A'ishah is doing it, it is Satan that is backing her."

Striking the camel

A'ishah's camel was used to achieve ominous goals and with A'ishah's presence in the howdah, it was bestowed with a special reverence. The army of the rebels in order to protect it from falling upon its own feet made intense efforts and sacrificed a lot of hands in this path. When a hand was cut off, another hand took control of its bridle. Ultimately, the camel's bridle remained without a holder and there was no one ready to hold it. At that moment, al-Zubayr's son took hold of its bridle, but Malik with a severe attack threw him upon the ground and took hold of his neck. When al-Zubayr's son realized that he was going to be killed by Malik, he started crying and said, "O people, surround Malik and kill him even if his killing results in my own death."

Malik struck his face and left him, and finally people scattered from the surroundings of A'ishah's camel. The Imam (ʿa), observing that A'ishah's camel might make people return again, repeatedly issued orders to strike it. Then, the camel fell upon the ground and A'ishah's howdah turned upside down. At that moment, cries of A'ishah were raised in a manner that both the armies heard her voice. Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** by the Imam's command, reached his sister opened the bonds. In this complex situation, words were exchanged between the sister and brother that are summarized as follows:

A'ishah: "Who are you?"

Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "The most disgusted person of your family with respect to you."

A'ishah: "Are you the son of Asma' al-Kashʿamiyyah?"

Muhammad: “Yes, but she wasn’t less than your mother.”

A'ishah: “It is true that she was a noble woman. Forget about it. Thank God that you remained safe.”

Muhammad: “But you didn’t want me to remain safe.”

A'ishah: “If I didn’t want, I would haven’t said such words.”

Muhammad: “You wanted your own victory even at the cost of my getting killed.”

A'ishah: “Yes, I wanted that, but it wasn’t in my luck. I wanted you to remain safe. Don’t reprimand me any more, behave like your father, who wasn’t like that.”

Imam Ali (ʿa) approached A'ishah’s howdah and, striking his lance upon it, said, “A'ishah! Did the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** recommend you for this task?” She replied, “Abu’l-Hasan! Now that you are victorious, excuse me.” It wasn’t long that Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Malik came and the following words were exchanged between them:

Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: “Mother! Have you seen the bravery of your sons? How was their swordsmanship in the path of religion?” A'ishah acted as though she hadn’t heard his words because Ammar was the most distinguished companion and chief of his tribe.

Malik: “Thank God that He helped the Imam and made his enemy wretched. Truth came and falsehood was plucked because falsehood has to go away. Mother! How do you see your own task?”

A'ishah: “Who are you? May your mother sit in your mourning!”

Malik: “I am your son, Malik al-Ashtar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.”

A'ishah: “You are lying. I am not your mother.”

Malik: “You are my mother even if you don’t want to be.”

A'ishah: “You are the same one who wanted to make my sister Asma' sit in the mourning of her son (Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr**Error! Bookmark not defined.**).”

Malik: “It was due to some reason that I should have an excuse before God.”

Then A'ishah, while she was riding on a mount, said, “You created glory

and became victorious, God's will always dominates."

Then, Imam Ali (ʿa) said to Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** "Ask your sister if an arrow has hit her?" The outside of the camel litter looked like a hedgehog because of the abundance of arrows. She said in reply, "Only one arrow has struck me in my head." Muhammad said to his sister, "God will judge against you on the Day of Judgment, because you are the one who rebelled against your Imam, motivated people to rebel against him and ignored the Book of God." A'ishah said, "Leave me alone and ask Ali to protect me from any injury and harm."

Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr**Error! Bookmark not defined.** informed the Imam (ʿa) of his sister's being in good condition and the Imam (ʿa) said, "She is a woman and women aren't very wise. Assume the responsibility of her safe transfer to the house of Abdullah ibn Khalaf so that we can decide about her." A'ishah received the compassion of the Imam (ʿa) and her brother, but her tongue was continuously polluted with ill-speaking about the Imam (ʿa) and asking God's forgiveness for the people killed in the Battle of the Camel.

Talhah and al-Zubayr

Historians agree that Talhah was killed by Marwan ibn al-Hakam. When Talhah witnessed his soldiers fleeing and felt the danger to his life, he decided to escape. At this moment, Marwan's eye caught him and he remembered that he was the most effective element in Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s murder; therefore, he shot an arrow that struck him and threw him upon the ground. Talhah felt that this arrow was shot towards him from his own garrison, so he ordered his slave to transfer him to another region. The slave took him to a ruin belonging to the Banu-Saʿd tribe while his blood was spilling from his wound and he said, "The blood of none of the elders was lost like my blood." Having said this sentence he gave up his soul.

Al-Zubayr, the second most important kindler of the fire of the Battle of the Camel, decided to escape to Medina by passing through the area of the al-Ahnaf ibn Qays tribe whose members had refused to participate in the war. The chief of the tribe lost his temper when he witnessed the cowardly act of al-Zubayr, because he had sacrificed people for his own self-interest and now he wanted to flee from the battlefield. One of al-Ahnaf's companions, named Amr ibn Jurmuz, decided to avenge the blood spilled due to al-Zubayr. He followed him and when al-Zubayr stood to pray, he attacked him from his back, killed him, confiscated his horse, arsenal and ring, left

the young man accompanying al-Zubayr without any harm, and buried al-Zubayr at a place called Wadi al-Sibaʿ.

Amr ibn Jurmuz returned to al-Ahnaf and informed them about al-Zubayr's death. He said, "I don't know whether you did something good or not." Then both of them came to the Imam. When the Imam's eyes caught al-Zubayr's sword, he said, "This sword repeatedly removed misfortunes from the Prophet (s)." Then he sent it for A'ishah. When the Imam (ʿa) thought of al-Zubayr, he said, "You were a companion of God's Prophet (s) for a long time and had bonds of kinship, but Satan dominated your reason and your task terminated in this manner."

Casualties of the battle

The number of casualties in the Battle of the Camel has not been reported with accuracy. Shaykh al-Mufid wrote, "Some have quoted the number of dead as twenty five thousand while Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** the fire-kindler of this episode, has quoted it at fifteen thousand."

Shaykh Mufid prefers the second quotation and says that what is famous is fourteen thousand.(1)

Burying the killed

The Battle of the Camel took place on Thursday, 10th of Jumada II, in 36 A.H., and before sunset, fight was ceased after the fall of the camel and the upturning of A'ishah's howdah. Not possessing the correct motivation, a majority of the renegades fled. Marwan ibn al-Hakam took shelter with a family belonging to the Anzah tribe and it can be read in *Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.** that Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn (ʿa) interceded for Marwan with the Imam (ʿa) who accordingly pardoned him. It is interesting that when Marwan expressed readiness to swear fealty to the Imam (ʿa) whose sons conveyed this desire to him, he said, "Didn't he swear allegiance to me after Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s murder? Now, I don't see any need for his allegiance because his hand is like the hand of a Jew; if he makes allegiance with his hand, he breaks it with his back. He would rule for a very short time as much as it takes a dog to lick its nose with its tongue. He is the father of the four rulers, and Muslims will see the bloodiest days from him

(1) *Tarikh al-Tabri* 3/543.

as well from his sons."[1]

Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr**Error! Bookmark not defined.** took shelter in the home of a man of the Azd tribe and informed A'ishah about his location. She sent her brother Muhammad, who was responsible for her safety by the Imam's order, to Abdullah's place in order to transfer him to Abdullah ibn Khalaf's home where she lived. Ultimately, Abdullah and Marwan were transferred there. Then, the Imam (ʿa) spent the remaining day in the battlefield and invited the people of Basra to bury their killed. According to al-Tabari, the Imam (ʿa) offered prayers upon the dead bodies of both parties and buried them together in a big grave. Then, he ordered that all of the booties should be returned to the people except the arsenal upon which the sign of the government had been engraved. He said, "From the wealth of a dead Muslim, nothing is permissible for others."[2]

A group of Imam's companions insisted that the rebels should be treated like polytheists; that is, the prisoners of war should be taken as slaves and their wealth should be distributed, but the Imam (ʿa) said, "If so, then who is ready amongst you to accept A'ishah as his share?"

Imam al-Sadiq (ʿa) explained, "Imam Ali (ʿa) fought the people of Basra because of their rebellion and corruption but didn't touch their wealth, because there is a difference in law between polytheists and Muslim rebels. Whatever the Muslims army gain from the camps of polytheists and atheist is permissible to take, but it isn't permissible to take what is gained from the camp of Muslim rebels. Imam Ali (a) left them indebted to him just as the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** did with the residents of Mecca."

Imam Ali talks to the dead

When the Holy Prophet (s) threw the dead bodies of the polytheists of Quraysh inside a well, who were killed in the Battle of Badr, he talked to them. When he was asked if the dead listen to the words of the living people, he replied, "You aren't a better listener than them."

Likewise, the Commander of the Faithful (ʿa), while passing through the dead bodies, saw the dead body of Abdullah ibn Khalaf wearing a beautiful dress upon his body. People said that he was one of the chiefs, but the Imam (ʿa) replied, "He wasn't; rather, he was a noble person of good

(1) *Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.**, sermon 73.

(2) *Tarikh al-Tabri* 2/543.

nature." Then he noticed the dead body of Abd al-Rahman ibn Attab and said, "This man was the pillar and chief of that group." Then he observed the dead bodies of a group of people of Quraysh and said, "By God, your condition is sorrowful for me. I completed my argument upon you but you were young men with less experience and not aware about the consequences of your acts."

Then he noticed the dead body of the judge of Basra, Kaʿb ibn Sur, who had the Quran hanged in his neck. He ordered that the Quran should be transferred to a clean place and then said, "Alas! You possessed knowledge which could have benefited you. But Satan made you totter, deviate, and finally pulled you to the fire."

Then the Imam (ʿa) noticed the dead body of Talhah and said, "You performed some good deeds in the service of Islam that could have benefited you, but Satan made you totter, deviate, and pulled you to the fire."

In this part of history, nothing more than the Imam (ʿa) condemning the rebels and introducing all of them as inhabitants of the fire has been mentioned, but the Muʿtazilah claim that some of these individuals were ashamed of their deeds and repented before their deaths. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** a staunch defender of the Muʿtazilah sect, wrote, "Our master mentors have narrated that Ali ordered his companions to seat the dead body of Talhah and then, addressing the dead body, said, 'It is unpleasant for me to see you under the sky and in the heart of a plain full of dirt. Was it appropriate to commit such a deed after participating in campaigns in the path of God and defense of His Prophet (s)?'

At this moment, a man came to the Imam (ʿa) and said, 'I was beside Talhah when he was struck by an unidentified arrow. He fell down and asked me for help and asked: Who are you? I replied: I am a companion of the Commander of the Faithful. He said: Give me your hand so that through you I can make allegiance with the Commander of the Faithful. Then he gave his hand to me.' At that moment, the Imam (ʿa) said, 'God wanted to take Talhah to Paradise in a state where he had made allegiance with me.'"[1]

This part of history is nothing more than fiction. Wasn't Talhah aware of the Imam's personality and his righteousness? This type of repentance is

(1) *Ibid*.

applicable to one who is living in ignorance for a long period, then gives up his ignorance after seeing the true face of reality, while Talhah from the earliest days knew the truth. Apart from that, even if this story is correct, Talhah's repentance according to the Holy Quran is fruitless: "*The Forgiveness isn't for those who do ill deeds until, when death attendeth upon one of them, he saith: 'Lo! I repent now; nor yet for those who die while they are disbelievers. For such We have prepared a painful doom.* [4:18]"

Could they wash their sins only by offering allegiance to the Imam (ʿa) after spilling so much blood in Basra and on the battlefield and leading a group like sheep? These justifications are given to prove the Holy Prophet (s) had issued advance judgment about all his companions**Error! Bookmark not defined.** as being honest and truthful, without recognizing the presence of hypocrites among them as mentioned by the Holy Quran.

Fall of Basra, dispatching letters and return A'ishah to Medina

The probability of a military conflict between the Imam's soldiers and the renegades of Basra was circulated in the Islamic lands through commercial caravans that were continuously traveling in the plains of Iraq, Hijaz and Syria, and a minority of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s supporters were waiting for news of victory, because defeat was regarded as fateful. Therefore, the Imam (ʿa) returned to his tent, called his secretary Abdullah ibn Rafiʿ**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and dictated some letters which were sent immediately.

The letters were addressed to the people of Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Medina, the most sensitive regions in the Islamic world of that day. He also wrote a letter to his sister Ummu-Hani. Through these letters, the Imam (ʿa) gave his friends the joyful news which disappointed his enemies. Shaykh al-Mufid(1) quoted the complete text of these letters, but al-Tabari only included a very short text of the Imam's letter to the people of Kufa and trusted the material written by Sayf ibn Umar.**Error! Bookmark not defined.** He probably was not honest about the truth and simply touched the edge of these sensitive issues.

Finally, Imam Ali (ʿa) on Monday left al-Kharibah for Basra. When he reached the Mosque of Basra, he offered two units of prayer, and then went straight to Abdullah ibn Khalaf's home, the biggest home in Basra, where A'ishah was kept under protection. Abdullah, during Umar**Error!**

(1) Shaykh al-Mufid, *al-Jamal*, pages 211-2.

Bookmark not defined.'s caliphate, was the secretary of the Court of Basra and he and his brother Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** were killed in the Battle of the Camel. Some people think that he had seen the period of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** although this matter isn't certain.

When Imam Ali ('a)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** entered Abdullah's home, his wife was in mourning. Abdullah's wife spoke rudely to the Imam ('a) who didn't reply to her. Then he entered A'ishah's room, sat near her and told her about Safiyyah's mistreatment. Even at the time of his leaving the home, Safiyyah repeated her rude words and this time the Imam's companions lost their self-control and threatened Abdullah's wife. The Imam ('a) prevented them from any sort of invasion and said, "I should never hear news about mistreating women."

Imam Ali's sermon in Basra

Having left Abdullah's home, the Imam ('a) went to the centre of the city where the people, holding different banners in their hands, reassured their fealty to him. Even the wounded ones and those who were granted pardon made allegiance with him. It was necessary for the Imam ('a) to inform the people of Basra about the profundities of their criminal treachery. Therefore, when the halos of illumination and magnificence surrounded him and the people of Basra were seriously eager to listen to his words, he said, "You were the soldiers of that woman and followers of that camel. Since it called, you replied to it; and when it was struck down, you fled. Your morals are low, your treaty is mutiny, your religion is sedition and your water is full of salt. Any one who resides in your city will be caught in your sins and whoever moves away from you will find God's blessing. It is as though I can see God' punishment from heaven as well from the earth descending upon you and I can see all of you drowned and only the minaret of your mosque, like the chest of a ship, seen upon water.(1) Your land is near the water but away from the sky. Your faculty of reason is very light and your thoughts are foolish. You are the target of shooters of arrows, fatty morsel for free-eaters and a hunt for the beasts.(2) O People of Basra! Right now what do you think about me?"

At this moment, a man rose and said, "We don't expect anything from you except goodness and welfare. If you punish us, we deserve it because we are

(1) *Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.**, sermon 130.

(2) *Ibid*. sermon 514.

sinners, and if you forgive us, forgiveness is dearest to God."

The Imam (ʿa) replied, "I have pardoned all of you. Move away from mischief-making. You were the first to have broken the staff of the community into two pieces; stop committing sins and repent sincerely."[1]

Good intention; reflection of the deed

At this moment, one of the Imam's companions stood up and said, "I wish my brother would have been here to witness your victory upon your enemies, and participated in earning the reward of jihad." The Imam (ʿa) asked him, "Was your brother's heart with me?" "Yes," the man answered, and the Imam (ʿa) said, "Your brother was then with me in this battle (and like other campaigns, he participated in this one and earned the rewards). Not only him, but those who are still in the backs of their fathers and ovaries of their mothers and the passage time will manifest them and faith will be strengthened through their means are partners in this battle."

This discourse indicates that the good and bad intention, from the point of view of reward and punishment, becomes the successor of the act itself. At other places in *Nahj al-Balaghah,* there are indications of this basic principle, including the following: "O people, approval or opposition of a task brings people under one banner. The she-camel of Prophet Salih was hamstrung by one person, but punishment took all of them because they were all contented with the act of that one person."

Distribution of the public treasury

The Imam's soldiers in this battle didn't own anything and their fighting was one hundred percent divine, because the Imam (ʿa) returned everything to their owners except the enemy's arsenal. The public treasury was also distributed among them. When the Imam's eyes fell on the treasury, he closed his hands and said, "Go away and trick some one else." The amount in the public treasury was six thousand Dirhams that was distributed among the soldiers and everyone received five hundred Dirhams. At the end of distribution, five hundred Dirhams were left which he assigned to himself. Suddenly, a person appeared and claimed that he had participated in this battle but his name hadn't been written in the list. The Imam (ʿa) gave those five hundreds Dirhams to him and said, "Thank God I have assigned nothing from this money to myself."

(1) *Ibid*. sermon 196.

Returning A'ishah to Medina

Because she was the Holy Prophet's wife, A'ishah received special attention. The Imam (ʿa) made arrangements for the mount and food for the journey and ordered Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to accompany his sister during her journey to Medina. He permitted his companions who were willing to return to Medina to accompany A'ishah and commissioned forty dignified women of Basra to accompany her to Medina. The first Saturday of the Month of Rajab, 36 A.H., was decided as the day of the start of the journey.

At the time of her departure, a group of people accompanied her and in this manner the ceremony of her farewell was performed. Having seen all that compassion and love from Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** towards A'ishah, she lost her control, became emotionally touched and said to the people, "O my sons, some of us wrangle with each other, but this act doesn't mean oppression. By God, between me and Ali there was nothing except what happens among a woman and her husband's relatives. Although he has suffered my wrath, he is one of the righteous and benevolent." The Imam (ʿa) thanked A'ishah for her comments and added, "She is the wife of your Prophet (s)." Then he accompanied her for a few miles.

Shaykh al-Mufid wrote, "Forty women who were accompanying A'ishah on the Imam's orders were dressed in male uniforms so that the strangers should consider them as men and malicious thoughts should not enter in their minds with respect to the wife of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** as well as in their own minds. A'ishah too assumed that Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** had appointed men as her guards and was continuously complaining about this act. When she reached Median**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and saw that her guards were women wearing male uniforms, she apologized for her criticism and said, 'May God bless the son of Abu-Talib with good rewards because of his paying respect to my relationship with the Prophet of God.'"(1)

Appointment of governors

During Uthman's reign,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** the affairs of Egypt were in the hands of Abdullah ibn Saʿd ibn Abi-Sarh; and one of the main factors behind the Egyptian's rebellion against Uthman were the

(1) Shaykh al-Mufid, *al-Jamal*, page 221.

governor's shameful deeds for which he was forced to leave Egypt. At that time, Muhammad ibn Abi-Hudhayfah was in Egypt and he continuously criticized the governor and the caliph. When the Egyptians left their land with the intention of going to Medina and prosecuting the caliph, they assigned the affairs of Egypt to Muhammad ibn Abi-Hudhayfah and he was still upon this position until the Imam (ʿa) appointed Qays ibn Saʿd as the governor of Egypt.

Imam Ali (ʿa) appointed Khalid ibn Qurrah as the governor of Khorasan, Ibn Abbas as governor of Basra, and finally decided to leave Basra and move towards Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. Before his departure from Basra, he dispatched Jarir ibn Abdullah to Damascus to hold discussions with Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to declare his obedience to the central government that was headed by the Imam (ʿa). Because of the crucial importance of Basra and since Satan had planted his eggs there, the Imam (ʿa) appointed Ibn Abbas as its governor, Ziyad ibn Abih as the tax-collector, and Abu'l-Aswad al-Du'ali as assistant for both of them. While introducing Ibn Abbas, the Imam (ʿa) delivered a very delicate and sweet sermon that has been narrated by Shaykh al-Mufid. Al-Tabari wrote that the Imam (ʿa) said to Ibn Abbas, "Crush the followers of sinners and those who don't obey your orders." When the Imam (ʿa) left Basra, he prayed to God, saying, "Thank God that He took me out from the filthiest of cities." In this manner, the first rebellion against the government of the Imam (ʿa) ended and he entered Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to plan a map to prosecute Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and cleanse the vast Islamic land from the existence of corrupt and self-centered elements.

KUFA;ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED. THE NEW CAPITAL OF CALIPHATE

Imam Ali (ʿa), in addition to being divinely appointed by God's Prophet (s), was selected by the Helpers and Emigrants; therefore, it was natural that he should make Medina the center of caliphate. In the beginning of his caliphate, he followed the same method; wrote letters, dispatched competent people, dismissed world-worshipping individuals, and delivered fiery and constructive sermons while managing the ruling affairs of the Islamic community.

The Islamic system during the twenty five years of the three caliphs was inundated with severe deviations; dishonesty was on the increase when suddenly the issue of reneging took place. The shocking reports reached the Imam (ʿa) and he was informed that with the financial help of the Umayyads**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and the prestige of the Prophet's wife, the south of Iraq had been occupied and the renegades had unjustly killed tens of the Imam's companions.

The fire of fighting between the righteous army of the Imam (ʿa) and the army of falsehood was ignited, ultimately making truth victorious and killing the leaders of the rebels. The city of Basra again returned to normal, its ruling affairs in the hands of the Imam's companions, and Ibn Abbas, the commentator of the Holy Quran and the most distinguished pupil of the Imam, appointed as governor of the city.

The apparent situation demanded that Imam Ali (ʿa) should return to Medina through the same path that he had come. But this was the apparent picture and every individual with superficial sight would have recommended this to the Imam (ʿa). Medina possessed a special sacred, spiritual and meaningful status because of being the real cradle of Islam, the place of burial of God's messenger, and the center of the Emigrants and Helpers who possessed the power of selecting and dismissing the caliph in their hands.

Despite all those dimensions, the Imam (ʿa) selected the path to Kufa to reside there for a certain period. This decision was taken after consultation with his companions because of the following two reasons:

1. When the Imam (ʿa) started his movement from Medina, he was accompanied by a large group and lots of groups joined him midway, but a majority of his soldiers and valiant loyalists consisted of residents of

Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and its surroundings areas. Courtesy and fairness dictated that he should visit Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to see the living conditions of these people, praise the warriors who had responded positively to his request and admonish those who remained indifferent or didn't participate in the fight.

2. Imam Ali ('a) knew very well that the rebels' sin, in reality, was the sin of Mu'awiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who had motivated them to break their allegiance and fraudulently given his hand for their allegiance in their absence. The letter that he had written to al-Zubayr clearly explained the lines of rebellion. Mu'awiyah told him that he had already taken allegiance for him from the people of Syria, so they should try to occupy Basra as soon as possible by using the excuse of vengeance of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s blood, and never allow the son of Abu-Talib to take control of those two cities in his own hands.

At present, the arrow of this rebel had gone in the wrong direction. It was now required that the roots of corruption should be cut off and this damned genealogical tree of the Umayyads**Error! Bookmark not defined.** be uprooted from the Islamic society forever. The nearest place to Damascus happened to be Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. Iraq was the only region to raise an army of dedicated soldiers. More than any other point, that should have been considered as crucial factor. The Imam ('a) in one of his sermons said, "I swear by God that I didn't come to you of my own freewill and choice, but fate sent me here to check your rebellious intentions against the religion and remove discord and disunity from society."(1)

These two reasons caused the Imam ('a) to select Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** as the capital of his caliphate. On Monday, 12th of Rajab, 36 A.H., accompanied by the elders of Basra, he entered the city of Kufa whose people, led by the reciters of the Holy Quran and distinguished personalities, welcomed the Imam ('a) upon his arrival. They considered the governor's palace for his stay and asked him to accept it as his residence, but the Imam ('a) refused and said, "The palace is the center of destruction."

He decided to reside in the house of his nephew, Ju'dah ibn Hubayrah, son of his sister Ummu-Hani, wishing to speak to the people from the yard of the mosque. He offered two units of prayer in the mosque, went to the

(1) *Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.**, sermon 70.

pulpit, praised God, invoked His salutations upon the Prophet (s), and said, "O people of Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, there are privileges for you in Islam on the condition that you don't try to turn them upside down. I invited you to the truth and you responded. You started with indecency but changed it. You are the leaders of those who respond positively to your invitation and enter wherever you have entered. What I fear for you are two things: following of whimsical desires and prolongation of desires. Following of whimsical desires prevents you from following the truth and prolongation of desires makes you forgetful of the final abode. Be aware that the world has always turned its back and gone away, whereas the Hereafter welcomes you and comes forward to you. For each of them there are two children. You should belong to the children of the Hereafter. Today is the time to work without accounting, and tomorrow will be the day of accounting without work.

Thank God that he helped His guardian and insulted the enemy, protected the truthful and righteous and made the allegiance-breakers and followers of falsehood wretched. You should practice piety and obey the person who has obeyed the holy progeny of God's Prophet (s). His group is superior and more deserving of obedience as compared to those who show their nearness to Islam and the Prophet (s) and claim power.

They confront us, and because of the privileges that have been given to them only by us, contest superiority with us and deny our rights and position. They have seen the punishment for their sins and very soon encounter the result of their deviation in another abode. Be aware that a group among you refused to help me and I condemn and admonish them for that. Quit them, and whatever they did not like to hear, make them hear it, so that they should seek the approval of the people, and the Party of God should again be identified from the party of Satan."(1)

Justice in the appointment of governmental officials

Imam Ali's compassionate response to the people of Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who hadn't helped him wasn't liked by some of the extreme revolutionaries. Malik ibn Habib, the chief of the Imam's police, stood up and said with a tone of complaint, "I consider this much punishment for them as insufficient. By God, if you permit me, I will kill all

(1) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waq'at Siffin*, page 3; *Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.**, sermons 27 and 41 Shaykh al-Mufid, in *Kitab al-Irshad* (page 124), narrated the first part of this sermon.

of them." The Imam (ʿa) astonishingly said, "Glory be to God! How strange this is! Habib, you have transgressed the limits set by God." Habib stood up once more and said, "It is more prudent to harshly punish them for their transgression and prevent future unpleasant incidents than show compassion to enemies." The Imam (ʿa) wisely guided him and said, "God hasn't given such an order. A man is killed for killing a man; then where is the command for oppression and transgression? God has said, '*We have given power unto his heir, but let him not commit excess in slaying. Lo! He will be helped.* [17:33]'"

Open political environment

When the people of Kufa,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who were against Imam Ali (ʿa),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** witnessed his discussions with his the chief of police and saw the Imam's justice with their eyes, they regarded the political environment as free and decided to explain their reason of offence:

1. A man from the opposite camp, named Abu-Bardah ibn Awf, stood up and clarified the reason for their not joining the Imam's soldiers by asking a question about those killed in the battle, "Did you see the killed ones in the vicinity of the dead bodies of Talhah and al-Zubayr? Why were they killed?" The Imam (ʿa) won the confidence of the asker towards his path and method by explaining the reason of their being killed, and said, "They executed my government employees with their swords and killed Muslim personalities like Rabiʿah al-Abdi. The crime of the killed was that they responded to the renegades and the tyrants. They would not break their commitments like them and wouldn't rise against their Imam through deceit and trickery. I wanted them to hand over the killers of my government employees so that they could be punished accordingly and then the Book of God could be a judge between me and them. Yet, they declined handing over the killers and started waging a war against me while my allegiance was upon their necks and spilled the blood of approximately one thousand of my friends. I, too, in order to seek vengeance from the killers and to quench their fire of rebellion fought and crushed their rebellion. Do you have any doubt about this?"

The asker replied, "I was doubtful about your truthfulness but after this explanation, their offence has become explicit for me and I understand that you are guided and realistic."(1)

(1) Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Which political environment can be freer than this, where the individuals opposed to the battle present the reason of their offence as doubt about the righteousness of the system of the ruler and receive their answer in the presence of a group of companions and chiefs of the Imam (ʿa)? Despite the fact that the asker before becoming a follower of Imam Ali (a) was a supporter of Uthman and, later on, waged wars in the line of Imam Ali (ʿa) but inwardly he had some secret links with Muʿawiyah.**Error! Bookmark not defined.** Therefore, after the martyrdom of the Imam and Muʿawiyah's domination upon Iraq, he was given a vast land in the area of Fallujah as compensation for the good services that he had undertaken for Muʿawiyah.

2. Sulayman ibn Surad was amongst those who didn't help the Imam (ʿa) in the Battle of the Camel and refused to join the Imam (ʿa), who then admonished him and said, "You doubted my truthfulness and righteousness and refused to participate in my army; while I considered you the most righteous and first person to come to my help. What factor prevented you from not helping the Ahl al-Bayt and made you indifferent to their support?" Sulayman, feeling extremely shameful, excused, "Please don't mention the past and don't admonish me for that. Accept my love and commitment that I will help you sincerely. The task has not been completed as yet and there are affairs remaining where you will be able to identify friends from foes."

The Imam (ʿa) didn't answered Sulayman, who waited for a while and then went to see Imam al-Hasan (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and said, "Aren't you surprised with the Imam's condemnation and admonishment?" Ali's son replied politely, "A friend is admonished because there are more expectations from him to help." Then the exalted companion informed him about the mutinies being planned against the Imam (ʿa) and said that there would be more need for righteous and sincere individuals like him. He said, "There will be future episodes where the spears of the enemy will gather around and swords will come out of their sheaths, and in those incidents, there will be more need for one like me. Please don't interpret my seeking your pleasure as a deceit and don't accuse me of not being your well-wisher." Imam al-Hasan (ʿa) replied, "May God bless you and we never accuse you of such."

After that moment, Sulayman didn't miss any chance of defending the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.**Error! Bookmark not**

3/104; Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, pages 4-5.

defined. He participated in the Battle of Siffin**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and killed the famous Syrian hero Hawshab. After Muʿawiyah's perdition, he wrote a letter to Imam al-Husayn (ʿa) inviting him to Iraq and acted negligently again from helping him in the land of Karbala'. However,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** later on, with four thousand people, he declared repentance. This group rose to avenge the blood of Imam al-Husayn (ʿa) and in 65 A.H. waged combat with a large group of soldiers dispatched from Damascus and attained martyrdom.

3. Muhammad ibn Mikhnaf narrated: "After the Imam's entrance in Kufa,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** my father and I went to visit him while a group of distinguished personalities and heads of tribes were already present there; all of them had committed the offence of not participating in the battle against the renegades. The Imam admonished all of them and said, 'You are the heads of your tribes, then why did you restrain your feet? If your intentions were simply laziness, all of you are losers; and if you were doubtful about my truthfulness and righteousness, then all of you are my enemies.' They replied that they were friends of his friends and enemies of his enemies. Then every one of them apologized to the Imam (ʿa) by presenting excuses of sickness or traveling. The Imam (ʿa) kept silent in the face of their excuses but praised the services of my father and my tribe and said, 'Mikhnaf ibn Salim and his tribe don't belong to that group described in the Holy Quran as follows: *Lo! Among you there is he who loitereth; and if disaster overtook you, he would say: God hath been gracious unto me since I was not present with them! And if a bounty from God befell you, he would surely cry, as if there had been no love between you and him: Oh, would that I had been with them, then should I have achieved a great success!* [4:72-3]'"

The Imam (ʿa) declared that if they had been excused this time and their excuses had been accepted, then this behavior shouldn't be repeated in the future. If the Imam (ʿa) hadn't issued such a mild condemnation and admonishment, it would have been possible that this group would continue their disobedience in the future.

Imam Ali's*Error! Bookmark not defined.* ***sermon at the Friday Prayer in Kufa****Error! Bookmark not defined.*

The Imam (ʿa) **Error! Bookmark not defined.**made the intention of residing in Kufa; he performed his prayer in the complete form and led the people in the Friday Prayers. Delivering the ritual speech of the Friday Prayer, he praised God, invoked His blessings upon the Prophet (s), and

said, "I recommend piety to you, because it is the best thing that God has recommended for his slaves, the best means of seeking His pleasure, and the basis of a prosperous end in His company. You have been commanded piousness and have been created for goodness and obedience of God... Perform your deeds for the sake of God without seeking fame. If any did something for someone other than God, He will hand over that person to him, and whoever performed a task for God, He will reward him. Be afraid of God's punishment as you haven't been created in vain. God is aware about your deeds and has appointed the duration of your lifetimes. Don't be tricked with the deceit of the world because the world deceives those who love it, and the arrogant is one who is made arrogant by the world. The other abode happens to be the real abode, indeed, if people know about it. I ask God to provide for me the position of martyrs, the companionship of messengers and the life of prosperous individuals."(1)

Dispatch of officials

While residing in Kufa,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** Imam Ali (a) dispatched righteous and competent individuals to the Islamic lands where till that time governors and commanders hadn't been assigned by him. History has recorded the characteristics of his commanders and their provinces with detailed accuracy. Khulayd ibn Qurrah was dispatched to Khorasan. When he arrived in Nayshabur, he was informed that movements had been made to motivate the people to rise up against the Islamic government with the remnants of Khosrow living in Kabul. He destroyed them with the help of the manpower that accompanied him and after arresting a group sent them to Kufa.

The dispatch of commanders throughout the length and width of the Islamic empire strengthened the government of Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, but the opposition of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** continued and required an urgent alternative for its removal. Imam Ali (ʿa) encountered a group that had lived for a long time under the tyranny of Khosrow. He asked how many kings from the family of Khosrow ruled upon them, and they replied, "Thirty two kings." He asked them about the style and method of their government, and they replied that all of them possessed one style but Khosrow son of Harmuz selected a special style. He assigned the wealth to himself and opposed our elders. Whatever was in the interest of people he destroyed it, and

(1) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, page 14; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.** 3/108.

whatever was in his own interest he established it. He considered people as degraded and made the nation of Persia miserable. Ultimately, people rebelled against him and he was killed. His wives became widowed and his children orphans. Imam Ali (ʿa) said, "God has created human beings with truth and isn't happy with any individual or his deeds except the truth. In the government of God, there is a point to remember in whatever He has bestowed; that is, a nation without management doesn't have an existence; therefore, it is required that a government should be established. Our task can be unified only when predecessors don't speak ill about their ancestors. Whenever the predecessors spoke ill of their ancestors and disobeyed their righteous methods, they destroyed themselves as well as others." Then Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** chose their elder as their chief.

Letters of Imam Ali to officials

The situation of some governors and their sincerity to the Imam (ʿa) wasn't very transparent and as yet they hadn't declared their own as well as the people's allegiance with him. Therefore, the Imam (ʿa) wrote letters to some governors who were appointed by the third caliph and asked them to clarify their position and declare their own as well as the allegiance of the people of their regions. Two important letters of the Imam (ʿa) exist; one was written to Jarir ibn Abdullah, the governor of Hamdan and the other to al-Ashʿath ibn Qays, the governor of Azerbaijan. To the governor of Hamdan, Imam Ali (a) wrote, "God never changes the condition of a nation unless they change their moral conditions. I want to inform you about the incident of Talhah and al-Zubayr after they broke their allegiance and inflicted a calamity upon the head of my governor Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Hunayf. Accompanied by the Helpers and Emigrants, I came out of Medina and midway ordered my son al-Hasan as well as Abdullah ibn Abbas, Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Yasir and Qays ibn Saʿd to go to Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to invite people to join the Islamic army to crush the rebellion of the allegiance-breakers. The people of Kufa answered positively. I dismounted before Basra and, forgiving their mistake, invited the heads of the rebels and asked them once more to remain steadfast upon their allegiance with me. But they refused and only wished to wage a war. I sought God's help and entered into battle. A group was killed and another group fled to Basra. Then, whatever I asked them before the battle, they asked it from me. Safety, prosperity, peace and goodness replaced the war. I appointed Abdullah ibn Abbas as the governor over there and I came to Kufa**Error!**

Bookmark not defined. and this letter is being sent to you through Dharr ibn Qays. Ask him whatever you want."

In this letter as well as the other one written to al-Ashʿath, efforts were made to clarify the reason of confrontation with Talhah and al-Zubayr so that Muslims should know that they first made allegiance with their Imam and with the breaking of their commitment destroyed the united organization of the society and started a rebellion. After the letter of Imam Ali (ʿa) reached the governor of Hamdan, he gathered the people and said, "O people! This is the letter of the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abi-Talib. He is the trusted one in religion and the world, and I am thankful to God for his victory over the enemy. O People, the Helpers, Emigrants and a group of followers made allegiance with him, and if they would have allowed the task of caliphate to be selected by all Muslims, he was the worthiest person for this task. O people, continuation of life is feasible only through unity of congregation, and death and destruction are the result of division. Ali leads you as long as you are steadfast upon truth, and if you deviate from it, he will return you to it."

People after hearing the words of the governor said, "We hear and obey and all of us are contented with his government." Then the governor wrote a letter indicating his and the people's obedience to the Imam (ʿa). Dharr ibn Qays, the messenger, stood up from his place and delivered an eloquent and beautiful sermon, saying, "O people! The Emigrants and Helpers made allegiance with Ali because of the perfection which existed in him and the knowledge that he possessed of the Book of God and the path of truth, but Talhah and al-Zubayr broke their allegiance and motivated people to rebel and didn't stop at this point; rather, they ignited the fire of war."(1)

The allegiance of the governor of Hamdan and people of the west made the pillars of Imam's government more steadfast. After a while, the governor went to Kufa to earn the Imam's confidence and support**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

Al-Ashʿath ibn Qays had a steadfast relationship with Uthman and his daughter was the wife of Uthman's son**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. Imam Ali (ʿa) sent a letter to him through his friend Ziyad ibn Marhab: "If there was nothing in your heart, you should have been the first to offer allegiance to me, and if you practice piety, it will motivate you to expose the

(1) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, pages 17-18; Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah*, pages 82-3.

truth regarding some of the affairs. As you are aware that people made allegiance with me and Talhah and al-Zubayr, have made allegiance, broke it and took the *mother of believers* from her own home to Basra. I rushed towards them and asked them to return to their allegiance, but they did not accept. I insisted but it didn't produce any positive effect…"(1)

Then the Imam (ʿa) wrote this historic sentence to al-Ashʿath, "Governorship isn't an oily-morsel but a trust. You have wealth with you which is the wealth of God and you are God's treasurer upon it so that you can return it to me. Know that I will not be a bad ruler for you if you follow the correct path…"(2)

Both letters were written simultaneously. While the first letter happens to be kind and explanatory, the second has a harsh and warning tone. The reason was the difference in the morale of the two governors. Al-Ashʿath wasn't inclined to seek allegiance and introduce the Imam (ʿa) to the people; therefore, after receiving the letter, instead of speaking, like the governor of Hamdan, he preferred silence. The messenger Ziyad stood up from his place and described the incident of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s murder and the allegiance-breaking of Talhah and al-Zubayr, saying, "O People! For one who is not contented with short words, lengthy words will not satisfy him. The Incident of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** isn't an issue that speaking of it would make you contented, but certainly the listener of the incident isn't like the seer of it. O people, be aware that after Uthman's murder the Emigrants and Helpers made allegiance with Ali. Those two people, Talhah and al-Zubayr, broke their allegiance without any reason and ultimately God made Ali the successor of the earth; and to the righteous belongs the good-ending."(3)

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(1) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah*, page 83; Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, pages 20-1.

(2) *Ibid*. In accordance with whatever was narrated in Nasr ibn Muzahim's *Waqʿat Siffin*, Sayyid al-Radi deleted the portion of the beginning of the letter. Refer to: *Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.**, letter 5. Ibn Abd-Rabbih in *al-Iqd al-Farid* 3/104 and Ibn Qataybah in *al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah* 1/83 quoted in summary whatever was narrated by Nasr. Refer to: *Masadir Nahj al-Balaghah* 3/202 and Ibn Maytham al-Amili's *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* 4/350.

(3) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah* 1/83-4; Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, page 21.

REASONS FOR STARTING THE BATTLE OF SIFFINERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

Imam Ali's firm message*Error! Bookmark not defined.* ***to Mu'awiyah****Error! Bookmark not defined.*

Having established the pillars of the divine government, Imam Ali (a) felt the time had arrived to cut off the roots of the damned tree from the land of Syria and defend Muslims from its sedition. This decision became absolute when Jarir, the governor of Hamdan, entered Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and knew the Imam's intentions. He asked him to assign him as his messenger and said, "I have a long friendship with Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. I will invite him to officially recognize your government of truth and if he remains in the obedience of God, he will be reinstated as your governor in Syria."

The Imam (ʿa) kept silent as he knew that Jarir was not qualified for such an assignment. Malik al-Ashtar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** opposed assigning Jarir as the Imam's representative, accusing him of cooperating with Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. But the Imam (ʿa), in spite of Malik's opposition, selected Jarir and the future also certified the correctness of his opinion. When the Imam (ʿa) dispatched Jarir, he said to him, "You have witnessed that all of the companions of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** are religious and the possessors of diagnoses are accompanying me... The Prophet (s) described you as righteous person from Yemen. Go with my letter to Muʿawiyah. If he accepts whatever Muslims have decided unanimously, so far so good; otherwise, announce to him that the silence and calmness that existed so far will not exist any more,(1) and inform him that I was never satisfied with his governorship, and the people also will not be contented with his reinstatement."(2)

Jarir carrying Imam's letter left for Syria. When he met Muʿawiyah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** he said, "The people of Mecca, Medina, Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Basra, Hijaz, Yemen, Egypt,

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(1) The Islamic ruler is required to warn before the war that any sort of immunity that existed before should be terminated. The Holy Qur'an has described this matter in the following verse: *"If thou fearest treachery from any folk, then throw back to them (their treaty) fairly. Lo! Allah loveth not the treacherous.* [8:58]"

(2) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, pages 27-8; *Tarikh al-Tabri* 5/235.

Oman, Bahrain and Yamamah have made allegiance with your cousin Ali, and nothing else remains except these few forts that you are in. If the flood starts from their plains, it will engulf everything. I come to invite you to righteousness and guide you to the allegiance of this man."[1] Then he gave the letter of the Imam (ʿa) to Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** in which it was written, "Verily, those who took the oath of allegiance with Abu-Bakr, Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, and Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** have sworn allegiance with me. Now, those who were present at the election have no right to go back upon their oaths of obedience and those who weren't present on the occasion have no right to oppose me. As far as the council is concerned, (limited franchise or selection) it was supposed to be limited to the Emigrants and Helpers. Also, it was supposed that whomsoever they selected would become the caliph as per approval and pleasure of God. If any one goes against such a decision, then he should be persuaded to adopt the course followed by others; and if he refuses to fall in line with others, then war is the only course left open to be adopted against him as he refuses to follow the course followed by Muslims. God will let him wander in the wilderness of his ignorance and schism and on the Day of Judgment will make him enter into hell; a hapless journey's end.[2] Talhah and al-Zubayr made allegiance with me and then broke their allegiance. Breaking of allegiance is like rejecting it that is like your act, Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. Truth came and the command of God became victorious. The best thing near me is your safety and prosperity, but if you insist on putting yourself in a calamity, I will fight with you and seek God's help in this path. You spoke too much about the killers of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. Like all other Muslims, you should also come to me and then raise the issue. I invite every one to follow the Book of God. You mention that I should hand over you the killers of Uthman so that you can make allegiance with me; this demand of you is like tricking a child with milk. By the oath of my own soul, if you return to your wisdom and not to your capricious desires, you will find me the most innocent person with respect to Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. Know that you belong to the

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah* 1/847; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* 3/75; Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, page 28.

(2) This is an indication to the Qur'anic verse: *"And whose opposeth the messenger after the guidance (of Allah) hath been manifested unto him, and followeth other than the believer's way. We appoint for him that unto which he himself hath turned and expose him unto hell—a hapless journey's end.* [4:115]*"*

Released Ones after having been taken as prisoners in Islam and, for this group, caliphate isn't legitimate nor do you have the right to be a member of the council. I am sending Jarir, who is a believer and an Emigrant, to you and those who are employed by you in order to make you announce your allegiance and loyalty."(1)

Representative of Imam Ali *Error! Bookmark not defined.****in Damascus***

The representative or ambassador of a person manifests his personality and an appropriate selection indicates the maturity and perfection of his reason. It has been said by ancient intellectuals, "The right selection is an indication of wisdom and the magnitude of development."

Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** selected a person to deliver the order of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s dismissal who was very well experienced in several political and governmental assignments, recognized Muʿawiyah very well, was an eloquent and skilled speaker. This person was Jarir ibn Abdullah. He delivered the Imam's letter to Muʿawiyah in the official assembly, and when he completed its reading, Jarir, as an official representative of Imam Ali (ʿa), stood up from his place and delivered a most eloquent, sweet and heart-rendering sermon. In that sermon, after praising God and invoking His blessings upon the Holy Prophet (s),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** he said, "The killing of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** by the Prophet's companions left the people who were present in Medina as helpless and incompetent, what to say about those who were absent from the scene. Then people made allegiance with Ali, and Talhah and al-Zubayr, too, were among those who made allegiance with him, but later on, without any feasible reason, broke it. Neither the code of Islam tolerates sedition nor do Arabs tolerate swords. Yesterday, a tragic incident occurred in Basra, which, if repeated, then none will remain.

Know that the masses made allegiance with Ali and if God had assigned this task to us, we wouldn't have selected any one except him. Whoever is opposed to the general selection should also accept the ruler elected by people in order to earn the contentment of people. You, too, Muʿawiyah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** should accept the path that

(1) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, pages 29-30; Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah* 1/84-5; Ibn Abd-Rabbih, *al-Iqd al-Farid* 4/322; *Tarikh al-Tabri* 3/235; Ibn Asakar, *Tarikh Dimashq*. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**Sayyid al-Radi in *Nahj al-Balaghah*, letter 6,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** deleted a portion of this letter.

has been chosen by people and accept Ali as the official ruler of Muslims. If you say that Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** appointed you on this position and you haven't been dismissed yet, these are the words which, if accepted, there is no religion left for God and every one should strongly protect whatever he has in his hold."

When the speech ended, Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** said, "Be patient, let me consult with the people of Syria so that I can announce the result."

*Error! Bookmark not defined.**Objective of seeking Mu'awiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s allegiance*

Imam Ali (ʿa), since the first day of his government, didn't insist on seeking allegiance from any one. Then why did he insist on seeking allegiance from Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**? The reason was that he wanted to dismiss him after his making allegiance and restrain his hands from the wealth and rights of Muslims. Those who pressed Ali's hand as an Imam of Muslims so that he could return the conditions to the days of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** wouldn't show any negligence in protecting their interest and advancing Islamic objectives. The existence of a person like Muʿawiyah was the greatest obstruction on this path. In principle, the revolution against Uthman demanded that all of the previous governors should be dismissed from their positions and the hands of wealth-accumulators and world-worshippers restrained from the rights of the deprived and helpless.

Mu'awiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined. **raises the issue to the Syrian people

On a particular day, the announcer of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** gathered the people of Damascus in the mosque. Muʿawiyah went upon the pulpit and praised God and the land of Syria with the title that God made it the land of prophets and righteous servants, and that the people of this land always obeyed God, the founders of His command, and the defenders of His code and helped them. Then, looking to the people, he said, "You know that I am the representative of Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn al-Khattab and Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Affan. I have never done any thing that I should be ashamed of with anyone. I am the guardian of Uthman who has been killed as an oppressed and God has said, '*We have given power unto his heir, but let him not commit excessive slaying. Lo! He will be helped.* [17:33]'"

Then, he added that he wished to know their opinion about Uthman's killing. At that moment, the people present in the mosque stood up and said, "We seek vengeance for Uthman's blood." Then they made allegiance with him for this task and reiterated that they would sacrifice their lives and wealth in this path.

Analysis of Mu'awiyah*Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s speech*

1. Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** praised Syria as a land of messengers and its people as supporters of God's representatives and defenders of the religion and God's commandments, to present himself as a defender of God's religion, as well as to excite the sentiments of people in his favor and prepare all of them on the path of a destructive war.

2. He introduced the killed caliph as oppressed whose blood had been spilled by a group of tyrants while, in fact, his blood was spilled by the companions of the Holy Prophet (s) and their followers on truth and justice.

3. Even if we assume that Uthman was wrongfully killed and his heir had the right to decide about his killers; was Muʿawiyah the inheritor of his wealth or did the presence of a closer inheritor not give him the chance? It is true that Uthman was the son of Affan, son of Abu'l-As, son of Umayyah, while Muʿawiyah was the son of Abu-Sufyan, son of Harb, son of Umayyah. All of them took their heredity to Umayyah, but was this distant bond sufficient in spite of the presence of the nearest heir that Muʿawiyah could introduce himself as the guardian of Uthman's blood?

Imam Ali (ʿa) wrote to Muʿawiyah, "You are the son of Umayyah, while the sons of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** are closer than you are in demanding with their father's bloodshed."(1)

The answers to these questions roll the curtain up from the conscience of Muʿawiyah and explicitly make it clear that the issue of retaliating on the killers of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** wasn't an issue at all; rather, the aim was to take over the government by isolating the Imam (ʿa) whom the Emigrants and Helpers had unanimously made allegiance with. The most astonishing thing was his seeking people's opinion. He asked the people's opinion in an environment which he had created and announced his absolute and firm determination to avenge the caliph's blood and persisted on this issue. This type of superficial ground preparation existed

(1) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, page 58; Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah* 1/91-2.

from ancient times.

“In spite of hearing the positive reply of the congregation, sorrow engulfed his heart and Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** murmured the following poetic verse:

I am hopeful of the best thing that I am going to accomplish for sure, and I am not disappointed by the country of Iraq.

In order to achieve his ambitions, he invited his supporters; Utbah ibn Abi-Sufyan said to him, “The issue of war with Ali should be consulted with Amr ibn al-Aas by purchasing his religion, because he is the one who separated himself from the government of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and naturally would like to take further distance from your government, but he could be bribed.”

MUʿAWIYAH'SERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED. CONFRONTATION WITH IMAM ALIERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

Mu'awiyah's letter Error! Bookmark not defined.to Amr ibn al-Aas

Amr ibn al-Aas was the most shrewd and seasoned figure of the political field living a life of exile in Palestine. Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** wrote this letter to him, "The episode of Ali and Talhah and al-Zubayr has reached you. Marwan ibn al-Hakam has arrived in Damascus accompanied by a group and Jarir ibn Abdullah, as a representative of Ali, came to seek my allegiance. I refused to take any decision until I know your opinion. As soon as possible, join me so that we can exchange opinions about this matter."(1)

When the letter reached Amr, he shared its content with his two sons Abdullah and Muhammad and sought their opinion. The first son, famous for piousness to a certain extent, said, "The day the Prophet of God and the two caliphs after him died, all of them were happy with you; and the day Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was killed you were not present in Medina. Right now, it is far better to sit inside your home and not sit in Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s company to earn an insignificant gain. You can never reach caliphate until you live but may become unfortunate in death." His second son opposed his brother and encouraged him to cooperate with Muʿawiyah, saying, "You are an elder of the people of Quraysh and if you remain silent in these affairs, you will become more insignificant in isolation. The truth is with the people of Syria. Help them and seek vengeance for Uthman's blood if the Umayyads rise for this task."

Amr, an intelligent person, looked to Abdullah and said, "Your opinion is for the profit of my religion, while Muhammad's opinion is profitable for my world. I should further ponder over this matter." Then he composed some poetic verses in which he reflected the opinions of both sons and after that asked his youngest son, Wardan, for his opinion. He replied, "Do you want me to inform you of whatever you have in your heart?" Amr said, "Tell me whatever you know." He said, "The world and the Hereafter have both

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(1) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah* 1/84; Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, page 34.

attacked your heart. Following Ali results in your prosperity in the Hereafter, although the world doesn't exist in following him, but the life of the Hereafter is meant to compensate for worldly failures. Accompanying Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** will give you the world but not the Hereafter, and the life of the world will not compensate for the prosperity in the Hereafter. You are now encountered with these two options and don't know which one to select." Amr said, "You are right; now what is your opinion?" He replied, "Sit down in your home; if the religion is victorious, you can live under its shelter, and if the people of the world become victorious, they will not be needless of you." Amr said, "Should I stay in my house now while my movement towards Muʿawiyah has reached the ears of the Arabs?"(1)

In his heart, he was a world-worshipper; therefore, he selected Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s option but composed delicate poetic verses about the advice of his youngest son:

Obedience to Ali is accompanied with religion and not the world,

*While following Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** give me worldly power*

Due to my greed and desire for power, I have selected the world,

But for this selection, I don't have any excuse or argument.

He then went to Damascus, engaged in discussion and made the plan to remove Imam Ali (ʿa) with his long time friend**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

Cooperation of the two seasoned politicians

Ultimately, Amr ibn al-Aas, the seasoned and famous Machiavellian of his period from the Banu-Sahm tribe, preferred the world over the Hereafter and left Palestine for Damascus so that once again in old age he could become the ruler of Egypt. He was completely aware of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s need for his strategy and politics; therefore, he tried his best to induce him to pay a heavy price for his services. During discussions, he continuously repeated and emphasized the importance of his role to keep Muʿawiyah's attention towards him. In the first negotiations, Muʿawiyah presented three problems, the most important of which was the Imam's readiness to attack Damascus. The details of their negotiations are quoted verbatim from Nasr ibn Muzahim's *Waqʿat Siffin*:

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah* 1/87.

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "Since a couple of days, my mind is occupied with three problems and I am continuously thinking about them and now I ask you to give me solutions."

Amr: "What are those three problems?"

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "Muhammad ibn Hudhayfah has broken the prison of Egypt and he is a calamity for *religion* [in reality, the government of Muʿawiyah]."

It should be explained that during Uthman's reign,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** the ruling affairs of Egypt were handed over to Abdullah ibn Saʿd ibn Abi-Sarh. Muhammad ibn Hudhayfah encouraged people to rebel against the governor of the time. After Uthman's murder, the governor because of fear of people quit Egypt and appointed a representative in his place. Muhammad encouraged people to rebel against the representative as well and ultimately forced him to leave Egypt and took control of the ruling affairs. In the beginning Imam Ali's caliphate, the position of the governor was assigned to Qays ibn Saʿd and Muhammad was dismissed. But when Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** established his power in Egypt, he imprisoned Muhammad who escaped from the prison with his companions in a special manner. Muhammad was very dynamic person and was able to create events; incidentally, he happened to be the son of Muʿawiyah's maternal uncle.

Amr: "This incident doesn't have any importance. You can dispatch a group to arrest or kill him or hand him over to you alive, and even if you do not capture him, he is not so powerful to take over government from you."

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "Caesar with a group of Romans is moving towards Damascus in order to take over this authority from me."

Amr: "The problem of Caesar should be solved through sending gifts like slaves, maids, and pots of silver and gold and invite him to a peaceful coexistence. This problem will be solved very soon."

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "Ali has dismounted in Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and is ready to move towards me. What is your opinion about this problem?"

Amr: "The Arabs will never consider you like or equivalent to Ali who is also aware of mysteries and there is no match for him among the people of Quraysh. He has the right to government that he has in his hands but only

until you oppress him and usurp his right."

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "I want you to fight with this man who has disobeyed God, killed the caliph, created sedition, created division among the congregation and cut off family bonds."

Amr: "By God, you and Ali can never be equal in nobility and distinctions. You neither possess the distinction of his emigration nor his other precious services; you don't possess his companionship with the Prophet (s), neither his fight against the polytheist nor his intellect and wisdom. By God, Ali possesses sharp intelligence, the purest mind and sincere endeavor. He is a man of virtue, prosperity, closeness to God, and he is a good and experienced ruler. In order to fight with such a distinguished person, what price are you willing to pay me so that I can be your partner in this mission? You know how much danger exists in this cooperation."

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "You are right, what do you want?"

Amr: "The government of Egypt."

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** completely astonished and he deceptively mentioned the issue of the world and the Hereafter: "I don't want that the Arabs should think that you have joined my party because of worldly gains. It would be far better if they imagined that you helped us seeking God's pleasure and the otherworldly rewards, because the insignificant gains of the world could never be equal with the rewards of the Hereafter."

Amr: "Stop these talks."

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "If I wish to deceive you, I can."

Amr: "One like me can't be deceived; I am more cunning than what you can imagine."

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "Come near me so that I can inform you about my inner secrets."

Amr approached and placed his ear near Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s mouth. Suddenly, Muʿawiyah bit his ear and said: "Right now, you saw that I can deceive you. Do you know that Egypt is like Iraq and both of them are considered as large provinces?"

Amr: "Yes I know, but Iraq will belong to you only on condition that Egypt

should belong to me. However, people of Iraq have surrendered to Ali's obedience and are ready to fight in his line."

At this moment, while both traders were drowned in the selling of their souls, Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s brother, Utbah, entered and said, "Why are you buying Amr at the cost of giving him the land of Egypt? Alas! But it will only be possible if this government of Syria will be left for you and no one bothers you." Then he composed a poetic verse and exposed the nature of cooperation between Amr and Muʿawiyah:

Give Amr his demand. Today he has sold his religion and renounced it for the sake of the world.(1)

Ultimately, Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** bought the cooperation of Amr and surrendered to his demand, but Amr wasn't satisfied with his deceit and trickery as he realized the probability of his being used as a bridge of victory and could be removed after the accomplishment of the task. Therefore, he looked at Muʿawiyah and said, "The contract should be written on a piece of paper and all the agreed conditions mentioned and signed by both parties."

The contract was written and readied for signatures, but the signatories added notes that exposed their deceit and discord near their signature and seal. Muʿawiyah wrote, "This contract is creditable only until the other party doesn't refuse to obey me." Amr, too, wrote, "With the condition that the other person that is being obeyed by me shouldn't break the conditions."

By adding these notes, they cheated each other and kept the path of offence open. Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s aim with the addition of this note was that Amr should make allegiance with Muʿawiyah absolutely and without any terms and conditions and that if one day Muʿawiyah didn't hand Egypt over to him, he would not have the right to break his allegiance on the excuse that Muʿawiyah hadn't been loyal to his promise. But when Muʿawiyah's seasoned adversary become aware of his fraud, he closed this option for him and wrote that this allegiance with

(1) The Holy Prophet in one of his talks said: "Never sell a thing that doesn't belong to you." Now let us see that what Amr sold with respect to the land of Egypt and what he gave up from his hand. In accordance with the clarification given by Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, until the moment of engaging in this transaction with Muʿawiyah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** he was lacking in religion and faith. Naturally, in this transaction, too, he entered with trickery and with an empty hand got the government of Egypt free.

Muʿawiyah was creditable only until Muʿawiyah wouldn't break the contract regarding the government of Egypt and Muʿawiyah should hand over Egypt to him. In reality, both persons were shrewd politicians with fox-like characteristics. Apart from that, none of them possessed either religious or political sincerity.

Amr, exploding with happiness and joy, came out of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s home and encountered the people who were waiting for him outside. Questions and answers were exchanged:

Amr's children: "Father! What was the ultimate result?"

Amr: "The government of Egypt was given to us."

Amr's children: "The land of Egypt as compared to the domain of Arab power is nothing."

Amr: "If you aren't satisfied with the land of Egypt, God will never make you satisfied with anything else."

Amr's nephew: "Under what title do you want to live among the people of Quraysh? You sold your religion and were deceived with someone else's world. Will the people of Egypt who are murderers of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** in spite of Ali hand over Egypt to Muʿawiyah? Assuming that Muʿawiyah would dominate over there, wouldn't the note added near his signature shorten your hand from the land of Egypt?"

Amr started thinking on the basis of the habit of the Arabs and not on the basis of trust in God, "The task belongs to God and not with Ali or Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. If my home was with Ali, it would have been sufficient for me, but right now I am with Muʿawiyah!"

Amr's nephew: "If you didn't want Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, he too would not have wanted you. You are greedy for his world and he is the buyer of your religion."

The discussion between Amr's nephew and his uncle reached the ears of Muʿawiyah, who wanted to arrest him but he fled to Iraq and joined the Imam's army and informed him about the negotiation held between the two shrewd old and skilled politicians and ultimately achieved a special position near him.

Marwan ibn al-Hakam, too, when informed about the political deal between Muʿawiyah and Amr, opened his tongue in complaint and said, "Why don't they buy me like Amr?" When Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was informed about his words, he asked him to be patient

and said, “Individuals like Amr are purchased for one like you so that he could strengthen the Umayyad authority and you are a part of it.”

Implementation of Amr’s satanic plot

Negotiations were ultimately completed between the two deceitful politicians and the time arrived that Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** should implement Amr’s plan. His suggestions of confronting Muhammad ibn Hudhayfah and the attack of Caesar were executed accurately and in both cases the mission was accomplished successfully. But the great problem of confrontation with Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who was still preparing to move towards Damascus remained. Amr presented a plan that resulted in the people’s happily being mobilized under Muʿawiyah’s banner.

It is said that one of the oldest companions went to Muʿawiyah, who**Error! Bookmark not defined.** welcomed him respectfully. He sat between Muʿawiyah and Amr and asked, “Do you know why I am sitting between you?” “No,” they replied, and he said, “One day, you whispered to each other in the presence of the Holy Prophet (s) who expressed, ‘**Error! Bookmark not defined.**May God bless him who keeps these two at a distance, because their meeting wouldn’t produce any good.’”

No factor can produce great movement and endeavors like faith. Nevertheless, religious sentiment, like a sword, has two possibilities. If it falls into the hand of the opportunist and self-centered ruler, its destructive power is beyond explanation.

Amr’s plan for confrontation with Ali (ʿa) was to ignite the religious sentiment of the people of Damascus against Imam Ali (ʿa),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** accuse him of the caliph’s murder, and use the ascetic and pious people of the society who are trusted and respected for publicizing this matter. In addition, he said to Muʿawiyah, “**Error! Bookmark not defined.**Shurahbil al-Kindi**Error! Bookmark not defined.**(1) is respected by the people of Syria and the enemy of his compatriot Jarir, the representative of Imam Ali. You must inform him about this matter in a manner that he should believe that Ali is really the murderer of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and assign people

(1) Kindah a tribe in Yemen. Its people used to live in the south of Arabian Peninsula and then a large group of them migrated to different points like Syria. Shurahbil belonged to this tribe whose ancestors had migrated from Yemen to Syria.

who are trusted by you and him that they should propagate this throughout Syria, and if such a thing entered Shurahbil's heart, it wouldn't leave easily."[1]

Mu'awiyah's letter** Error! Bookmark not defined.**to Shurahbil

Muʿawiyah wrote a letter to Shurahbil and informed him about the arrival of Jarir from Ali (ʿa). Shurahbil at that moment was living in Homs. Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** invited him to come to Damascus as soon as possible. Then, all the mercenaries of his court who belonged to Yemen and had good relations with Shurahbil were assigned to go to Homs and all of them unanimously introduce Ali as the murderer of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. When the letter of Muʿawiyah reached Shurahbil, he invited his friends and informed them about Muʿawiyah's invitation. A man who was seen as the most intelligent person of Syria stood up and warned him against the tragic end of this task, saying, "Since the day you migrated from infidelity to Islam, you have continuously been under divine blessings and until now thanking of God has not been renounced by the people, His blessings will never be cut off. God doesn't changes the condition of the people unless they change it themselves. The news of Uthman's killing**Error! Bookmark not defined.** by Ali has reached us. If Ali had really killed him, the Emigrants and Helpers would not have made allegiance with him and they are the guardians over the people; and if Ali hadn't killed him, then why do you believe Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**? I plead you not to offer yourself and your relatives to be doomed. If you are scared that Jarir might get a position, you too can go, see Ali and make allegiance on behalf your tribe and people of Syria."

Yet, well-wishing of that man wasn't effective. Shurahbil gave a positive reply to Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s invitation and started his journey to Damascus.

During his journey from Homs to Damascus, he was respected and welcomed by all. Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** had a meeting with him and said, "Jarir has come from Iraq and he invites me to make allegiance with Ali and Ali is the best person except that he is the killer of Uthman. I have decided not to make any decision by myself, because I am only a person among the people of Syria and whatever

(1) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waq'at Siffin*, page 24; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.** 2/71.

opinion they have I will accept it and whatever they consider as abominable I also won't like it."

The ascetic of Syria refused to announce his opinion and said, "I should make investigations and then give my opinion." He left the meeting and started following the path of investigation. The individuals who had already been assigned by Muʿawiyah to brainwash him contacted him under various pretences and testified that the Imam (ʿa) was the killer of Uthman and introduced doubts and contradictions in his heart with respect to Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. The poisonous propaganda and fabrications confused the mind of this simple-minded man and turned him into a pot hotter than soup; therefore, when he contacted Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** the second time, he said, "I didn't hear anything from the people except Ali being a killer. You don't have a right to make allegiance with him and if you did so, we will kick you out of Syria or kill you."(1)

Hearing these words, Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was convinced that the pretentious persons had deceived this simple-minded man very well. Then, he said to him, "I am a person among the people of Syria and I will never oppose you." The man left the meeting, went to see al-Hussayn ibn Numayr, and requested him to dispatch one to the representative of the Imam (ʿa) so that he could have discussions with him.

When the three sat down for discussions, Shurahbil look at Jarir and said, "You came to me with a vague report so as to throw us in the mouth of a lion and destroy Iraq and Syria together. You praise Ali while he happens to be the killer of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and you are responsible before God on the Day of Judgment." When Shurahbil finished, Imam Ali's representative replied as follows: "I have not come to Damascus with a vague report. How can the caliphate of Ali be ambiguous while the Emigrants and Helpers have made allegiance with him and because of breaking it killed Talhah and al-Zubayr? You have thrown yourself into the mouth of a lion and I have not done anything. If Iraq and Syria become united for the protection of truth, it is far better than being separated for an act of falsehood. You say that Ali is the killer of Uthman.**Error! Bookmark not defined.** By God, these words are nothing except shooting an arrow of accusation from a farthest point. You have inclined to the world and since the period of Saʿd**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

(1) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, pages 47-8; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* 2/73.

have something in your heart."[1]

The meeting ended and Jarir later on sent a message by composing elegiac poetry for his compatriot Shurahbil:

Shurahbil, don't follow whimsical desires
Religion can't be exchanged for the world.
Tell the son of Harb that he doesn't possess any respect
To accomplish whatever he has intended,
Cut off his hope![2]

When this message, containing excellent advice in beautiful verses, reached Shurahbil, he was shaken and went into deep thoughts, saying, "This message contains guidance for my world and Hereafter. By God I will not make haste in decision-making."

When Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** heard about the discussions and about Jarir's message, he admonished the Imam's representative and ordered a group to contact Shurahbil regularly and blow up the incident of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s killing by Ali in order to neutralize Jarir's words. To accomplish their objective, they didn't even hesitate taking false oaths and presenting fabricated letters to him. This group of lackeys deceived him again and he became steadfast in his goal.

When other chiefs of Yemen tribes learned about Shurahbil's decision and how he was deceived, they couldn't find any alternative except to send his nephew to him so that he could enlighten him. He was among those people from Syria who had made allegiance with Imam Ali (ʿa) and was considered righteous. He composed elegiac poetry and rolled the curtain up from the deceit and trickery of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and reminded him that those witnesses and letters were nothing except fabrication. When the man learned about the content of his poetic verses, he said, "He is the dispatcher of Satan. By God, I will force him to leave Syria if I can get hold of him."

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was monitoring the journey of Shurahbil's thoughts through his own people. When he found him

(1) This is an indication of this Qur'anic verse: *"When they disbelieved in it of yore! They aim at the unseen far off.* [34:53]*"*

(2) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, pages 48-9; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* 2/80-1.

determined in his decision, he wrote him this letter: “Now that you have responded to the truth, your reward belongs with God. You know that the righteous people have accepted your opinion but their contentment and awareness of this group is not sufficient for confrontation with Ali. A general approval of a campaign against Ali is required. There is no option left except to travel to various cities of Syria and declare that Ali killed Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and it is mandatory upon Muslims to seek vengeance from the killer.”

He started his journey from Damascus. First, he arrived in Homs and delivered a sermon: “O People! Ali has killed Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** as well as a group who lost their temper with him. Ultimately, Ali has become dominant upon all the Islamic lands and only Syria is left. He has put the sword upon his shoulders and passed through the vortex of death to reach you unless an event occurs by God. For his confrontation, there is no one more powerful than Muʿawiyah;**Error! Bookmark not defined.** hence, arise and start moving.”

The words of the deceived ascetic influenced the people of Homs who had a special affection for him and all of them responded positively to his request except the righteous people who unanimously condemned him. Then Shurahbil journeyed to other cities of Syria to invite people to fight against Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and received positive responses. He returned to Damascus and drunken with pride reached Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and repeated his earlier words strongly, “If you wage war against Ali and Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**’s killers, we will succeed to take revenge or sacrifice our souls for the sake of our cherished objective. In this case, you will remain in your position or we will dismiss you, place another one, wage war under his shadow, take revenge from Ali, or be killed.”

These words gladdened Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

Final argument of Jarir

Witnessing what he had never expected, Jarir became extremely sad and once more decided to contact his old friend tribesman to inform him of the horrible consequences of his decision. He said, “God has prohibited the Islamic community from spilling blood. He has removed the division and it is very close that the Islamic countries return to calm and normality. Don’t encourage corruption among people. Silence your words lest the task reaches a point where you will not be able to return it.” Shurahbil answered, “No, I will never be silent.” Then he rose and talked in a general

assembly and people approved of his opinion. It was at this juncture that the representative of the Imam (ʿa) became completely depressed and hopeless and then didn't know what to do.

Reasons for Jarir's defeat

Undoubtedly, Imam Ali's representative failed in his assignment. He was unable to advance his task and informed the Imam (ʿa) about the ultimate decision of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who prepared the people of Syria to wage war against him. The reason of his taking things easy was that he was deceived by Muʿawiyah's promises who, with his Umayyad and Satanic trickery, delayed the announcement of his opinion and kept the representative in a condition of hope and fear. Jarir hoped that he might convince Muʿawiyah to make allegiance and thus remove the split, saw his own stay as worthy and continuously endeavored to seek Muʿawiyah's absolute opinion.

The declaration of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s opinion in the early days was not in his interest. His opinion since the first days of the entrance of the Imam's representative was opposition, stubbornness, and rebellion against the central caliphate, but an announcement of such an opinion would have resulted in the return of the representative to Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and inform about the details of Muʿawiyah's opposition and naturally the Imam (ʿa) wouldn't have shown any pause and would have inflicted a heavy blow with his huge army and cut off the roots of corruption.

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** kept the Imam's representative delayed in Damascus with different types of excuses so that he could get the cooperation of Amr ibn al-Aas. Then, he dispatched groups to propagate a very poisonous and disgusting face of Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** in the minds of people of Syria and use their affection for caliphate in his own interest.

These Satanic achievements became possible for Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** because the Imam's representative was deceived by the apparent superficiality of Muʿawiyah, suspended the Imam's decision against this greatest of peak of corruption and returned to the Imam (ʿa) when Muʿawiyah had already mobilized a large part of Syria against him, while the motivation of vengeance for Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s blood was already nested in their minds.

Mu'awiyah*Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s last plot***

The last card which Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** had at his disposal was testing the Imam (ʿa) whether he was absolutely determined to dismiss him from his position or not. He went to the house of Jarir and said, "I have some fresh ideas that you should write to your friend to hand over the government of Syria to me and the taxation of Egypt. After his death, he shouldn't put my neck under the allegiance of anyone else. In this case, I will surrender myself to him and declare his government in writing."

The Imam's representative said, "Write your letter and I will convey it." The letters were written and a messenger took them letters to Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. Muʿawiyah's letter**Error! Bookmark not defined.** became famous among the Arab tribes. Muʿawiyah's co-thinkers, like al-Walid ibn Uqbah, criticized him for writing the letter. He composed this poetic verse and sent it to Muʿawiyah:

Whatever you asked Ali, you will never accomplish it

If you received it, it would stay only for a few nights.

Al-Walid said the truth, because Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** would never compromise with Muʿawiyah, but he would never break his commitment as his commitment in the issue of arbitration was always clear and explicit.

Muʿawiyah had a better understanding of Imam Ali (a) than al-Walid and knew that both options were to his advantage. If Ali would hand over the government, a durable government without any headache would be his, and if he wouldn't, Muʿawiyah would put on his boots more tightly in order to spill the blood of the aroused masses of Hijaz and Iraq. Such time delaying tactics were in Muʿawiyah's interest because he improved his fighting capacity and was able to mobilize the people of Syria to fight against Imam Ali (ʿa).

Imam Ali (a) wrote to Jarir, "The aim of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** is that he should not have any allegiance upon his neck to accomplish whatever he wants, and by keeping you installed over there prepare the people of Syria for war. In the very early days when I was in Medina, al-Maghirah advised me to reinstate Muʿawiyah upon his position but I didn't accept it. May God never bring the day when I should accept the help of deviated individuals! If he gives his hand for allegiance, then do

nothing; otherwise, return to me."(1)

Jarir's delay in Damascus resulted in the people of Iraq accusing him of compromise with the enemy. Since this news reached the Imam's ears, he said about him, "I will write another letter terminating his stay in Damascus. If after this he decides to reside in Damascus, then he has been deceived or has regarded my order and entered the gate of opposition.

The Imam (ʿa) thus wrote another letter to Jarir: "I praise God and invoke His blessings upon the Holy Prophet (s).**Error! Bookmark not defined.** I want to advice you that as soon as you receive this letter, force Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to reply to my letter written to him. Compel him to a decision and give me a final reply. He must decide between two things; either war or obedience. If I am ready, I will fight against him, and if it is going to be peace, then you must make him swear the oath of allegiance to me and return."(2)

When Jarir received the Imam's letter, he read it for Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and said to him, "The heart of a man in the shadow of sins becomes closed and in the shadow of repentance opens, and I see your heart closed. You are confronted with truth and falsehood and looking for a thing that belongs to other than you." Muʿawiyah replied, "In another meeting, I will declare my absolute opinion." He announced his absolute opinion when the people of Syria had shown allegiance with him and he had examined them. It was then that he asked the Imam's representative to leave Damascus and wrote a letter to the Imam (ʿa) that historians narrated as follows: "Since the Emigrants and Helpers made allegiance with you because you were immune from Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s blood, your caliphate is like that of the past three caliphs, but you motivated the Emigrants to spill Uthman's blood and prevented the Helpers from helping him. As a result, the ignorant made allegiance with you and the weak turned to the powerful. People have decided to fight with you so that you should hand over Uthman's killers to them. Whenever you do that, the issue of caliphate will be referred to the Muslim Council. On my own soul, your situation with me is not like the situation of Talhah and al-Zubayr because those two had already made allegiance with you but I refuse to make allegiance. Also, people of Syria

(1) Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* 3/84; Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, page 52.

(2) *Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.**, letter 8; Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, page 55, with minor difference in the text of the letter.

are not like people of Basra who had taken your allegiance and entered your obedience, while people of Syria have not accepted your caliphate and have not entered the gate of obedience. Your distinctions in Islam, your relationship with God's Prophet and your position amongst the people of Quraysh are things that I never deny."(1)

This letter indicates Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s Machiavellian fraudulence and how he uttered all sorts of false accusations against his rival. The Imam (ʿa) in his letter only limited himself to facts and realities. He replied to Muʿawiyah's accusations thus: "The letter of a person has reached in my hands that neither possesses any thought that could guide him nor has any leader who can show him the path. Carnal desires have invited him and he has accepted their invitation and surrendered himself to them. You imagine that my act with respect to Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** has cancelled my allegiance upon you. By my own soul, I belong to the Emigrants and wherever they entered I too entered, and God never gathered them upon deviation nor pulled a curtain upon their eyes. Regarding Uthman's murder, I neither issued any order that could be regarded as my mistake nor killed him so that retaliation should be taken against me. You mentioned that people of Syria today are rulers upon people of Hijaz. Show the name of a person whose membership can be accepted in the council and the succession to the Prophet (s) be valid to him. If you have such assumptions, the Emigrants and Helpers will deny it. Your asking me to hand over Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s killers to you is really weird. Who are you to Uthman? You are a man from the Umayyads and Uthman's children are more deserving for this task. If you think that in order to seek the vengeance for their father you are stronger and more powerful, first enter in the domain of my obedience and then complain about his killers. I encourage everyone to follow the path of truth. But your judgment about Syria, Basra, Talhah, al-Zubayr and yourself is baseless and the same verdict is applicable to all, because that was an allegiance taken by all which can be neither changed nor renounced. Your insistence on accusing me of Uthman's murder is not said with truth and news hasn't reached you about this incident. You accepted my distinction and nearness with the Prophet (s). By my own soul, if there was a way, you would deny that as

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah* 1/91; al-Mubarrad, *al-Kamil* 3/184; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* 3/88; Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, page 52.

well."[1]

Then, he ordered al-Najjashi, spokesman of his government, to attach an epic anthem to the reply.

Jarir, the representative of the Imam (ʿa) tried his best to obtain his goal without any bloodshed and urged Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to surrender to the obedience to the central government, but he was deceived in waiting for their final reply with promises of today and tomorrow. This blunder of Jarir kept the Imam (ʿa) waiting for months to receive Jarir's reply about Muʿawiyah's decision, after he had arrived in Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** early in Rajab 36 A.H. As a result, Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was able to reinforce Syrians with arms for combat against the Imam; therefore, a surprise attack for the enemy was no more applicable. There is no definite proof that Jarir could have done it intentionally, but his mistake influenced the trend of Islamic history and the deviated group was indebted to the blunder of the Imam's representative.

During his residence in Kufa,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** the Imam (ʿa) performed some important tasks and dismissed governors and appointed righteous individuals. It was after he resided in Kufa that he called Jarir from the position of governor of Hamdan and assigned such a crucial assignment. One of his tasks was meeting the valiant youths who were ready for combat with the enemy and asked his permission to move and go to the borders of Syria. Since the Imam (ʿa) wanted to avoid bloodshed and wished to solve the problem without a military encounter, he didn't permit them to leave and said to them, "Making a decision of waging war while Jarir is still with Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** appears as if I am closing the doors to peaceful negotiations with the Syrians and I am forcing them to rebel against me even if they have a genuine and sincere desire to make allegiance with me. The fact is that I have already fixed a time for Jarir's return. If he still prolongs his stay over there, then there could be two possibilities; either he is being fooled by Muʿawiyah or he has turned a rebel against me. I prefer to be a little prudent in this task, but people should be prepared gradually so that at the time of movement there should not have any reason for unnecessary

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah*, 1/91-2; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* 3/89; al-Mubarrad, *al-Kamil* 3/224; Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, pages 57-8. In the letters 6 and 7 of *Nahj al-Balaghah*, a**Error! Bookmark not defined.** reference has been made to this letter.

delay."

Jarir, after that prolonged suspension, returned disappointed to the Imam (ʿa). Malik al-Ashtar accused him of betrayal and harsh words were exchanged between them:

Malik: "My Imam, if you had dispatched me instead of him, I would have accomplished the mission accurately. This man has closed all doors to hope in our faces. The Umayyads have purchased his religion in the past by appointing him as governor of Hamdan. He doesn't deserve to walk upon the earth. Now that he has returned from Damascus, he is frightening us with their power. If the Imam permits me, I will send him and his co-thinkers to prison until the incident becomes clear and the tyrants are destroyed."

Jarir: "Alas! You should have gone instead of me and you wouldn't have returned alive, because Amr, Dhu'l-Kala and Hawshab would have killed you since they consider you Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s killer."

Malik: "If I would have gone, their reply wouldn't have made me weak. I would have invited Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to a path and never given him time to think."

Jarir: "Right now, the path is open, go ahead."

Malik: "It is too late now as the episode has already ended in Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s favor."

There is no doubt that the logic of Malik al-Ashtar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was very strong and Jarir didn't have any answer. It was desirable for a defeated diplomat to accept his mistake and request pardon, but facing Malik's criticism, he offered resistance and gradually distanced himself from the Imam (ʿa) and took refuge in Farqisia. If Jarir until that time hadn't committed any crime, his earlier mistake was pardonable, but leaving the Imam and living at a distant place was a sort of practical complaint against the Imam's government. Because of Jarir's isolation, tribal prejudice did its own job and only a small number, exactly nineteen people, from Jarir's tribe moved in the Imam's saddle although seven hundred people of other clans participated.

Jarir's act was a sort of rebellion against the government of truth and the Imam (ʿa) destroyed the home of Jarir and his sympathizer Thawr in order to be a lesson for others.

Mu'awiyah's letters*Error! Bookmark not defined.* ***to some personalities***

Before moving to Siffin, Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** said to Amr, "I want to write letters to three persons and motivate them to rebel against Ali (ʿa). These are Abdullah ibn Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Saʿd ibn Abi-Waqqas, and Muhammad ibn Maslamah." Amr agreed and added, "These three people aren't out of these three possibilities; they either support Ali and in that case your letter will make them more steadfast in the path of Ali, or support Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and in that case nothing will increase their steadfastness, or stand neutral and in that case you will never be more influential in their opinion than Ali. Therefore, your letters will not produce any effect upon them." Muʿawiyah didn't accept his opinion and wrote a letter to Abdullah ibn Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** signed by Amr and him whose content is as follows: "If the reality is hidden for us, certainly it isn't hidden from you. Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was killed by Ali because he has pardoned his killers. We are seeking vengeance for Uthman's blood so that we can retaliate against him in accordance with the command of the Holy Quran. If Ali hands over Uthman's killers to us, we will leave him alone and then the issue of caliphate like Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn al-Khattab will be presented to the council among Muslims. We did not seek caliphate; neither in the past nor at present. We want you to rise and help us in this path. If we unite against Ali, he will be intimidated and prefer withdrawal."(1)

Abdullah wrote back, "By my soul, both of you have given up being realistic and intelligent. You are looking at things from a distance and your letter has increased the doubt and contradiction for the doubtful. What do you have with caliphate? Muʿawiyah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** you belong to those who were released; and Amr too is an accused and untrustworthy person. Leave me alone, I don't need your help."(2)

Abdullah's reply proved Amr's **Error! Bookmark not defined.**farsightedness, making Muʿawiyah realize that he hadn't reached the level of his shrewd rival in these affairs.

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(1) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waq'at Siffin*, page 63. According to Ibn Qutaybah, this letter was written by Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to the people of Medina and Mecca.

(2). Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waq'at Siffin*, page 63. Ibn Qutaybah mentioned another letter in reply to Muʿawiyah's letter. *al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah* 1/89-90.

By writing these letters, Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** wanted to gauge the views of neutral personalities that had not yet opposed Ali (ʿa). They lived in Medina and Mecca who were respected by people and winning their favor would have created a colony of opposition in the two great cities regarded as centers of the council and important for the selection of a caliph. Yet, these persons were intelligent enough not to be deceived by Muʿawiyah and press his hand. Saʿd and Muhammad ibn Maslamah, like Abdullah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** rejected Muʿawiyah's advances**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

Nasr ibn Muzahim narrated another letter written by Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to Abdullah accusing him of opposing the Imam (ʿa) and intending to plan the seed of opposition in his heart: "I don't desire caliphate for myself but want it for you and in case you don't accept, it should be raised in the council of Muslims."

Although Abdullah was known for his simple-mindedness, he read Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s letter and wrote back, "By my soul, where am I and where is the precedent of faith and emigration of Ali, his position and nearness with the Prophet (s), and his fight against the polytheists? If I opposed, it was because I had not heard anything from the Prophet (s) in this event; therefore, I refused my inclination towards both sides."(1)

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** wrote this letter to Saʿd ibn Abi-Waqqas: "The worthiest of helping Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** were the people of Quraysh. They selected him and preferred him over others. Talhah and al-Zubayr arose for his help and they were your colleagues in the council and possessed a level similar to you in Islam. The *mother of believers* A'ishah too rushed to his help. It is not worthy for you to hesitate. We should return caliphate to the council."(2)

Saʿd wrote back, "Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn al-Khattab sent those people to the council for whom caliphate was permissible. None among us was more deserving than Ali and all of us should have accepted his caliphate. If I possessed some distinctions, Ali possessed them too whereas Ali possessed a lot more distinctions that I did. If Talhah and al-Zubayr had remained seated in their own homes, it would have been far

(1) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, pages 72-3.

(2) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah* 1/90; Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, page 74.

better. May God forgive the *mother of believers* for what she did."[1]

Muʿawiyah, writing a third letter to Muhammad ibn Maslamah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** tried to flatter him as the horsemen of the Helpers. He wrote, "The Helpers who belong to your tribe have disobeyed God and insulted Uthman;**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and God is going to ask them and you on the Day of Judgment."[2]

Muhammad wrote back, "**Error! Bookmark not defined.**You don't want anything except the world and don't follow anything except your whimsical desires. After Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s death, you are defending him, while during his lifetime you didn't help him."[3]

These letters clearly indicate that Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** had no other aim except to create disorder and chaos and induce the Muslim community against Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. Everyone knew that the Imam (ʿa) had been appointed to this position by the Helpers and Emigrants. He was sitting in his home when people stormed it with insistence, took him to the mosque, made allegiance with him and, except for a few people, no one refused his allegiance. If the Emigrants and Helpers didn't help Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** too refused to help him. Besieging Uthman's home continued for a long time and Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was very well aware about it and could have rushed to help him, but he didn't; rather, he acted as a spectator of his death.

Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** personally wrote a letter to the people of Syria and its ruler Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and sought their help, adding at the end of his letter: "Rush towards the help of your leader. Muʿawiyah, hurry up! hurry up! Try to understand! Try to understand! Do something immediately for my rescue." Muʿawiyah treated this letter for desperate help as unimportant, but after his death he started thinking of taking revenge! Historians quoted different lengths of the siege; forty-nine days, two months and ten days, or forty days. It is most unlikely that the news of the siege did not reach Muʿawiyah.

(1) *Ibid.*

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) *Ibid.*

Truth-tellers

Flatterers change facts in order to please the powerful and the wealthy, but throughout history, we encounter great statesmen who never trade truth with anything else and their tongues didn't speak but the truth. The people of the Tay tribe lived in the middle of two mountains between Damascus and Medina. All of them, including their chief Adi ibn Hatam adored Imam Ali (ʿa) loyally and faithfully**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

Adi said to Imam Ali (ʿa),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** "A man from my tribe is going to Damascus to meet his cousin. He is an eloquent orator and poet. If you allow me, I will request him to meet Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and explain your position in Iraq and Medina to break the morale of Muʿawiyah and the Syrians." The Imam (ʿa) gave his permission, and the man went to Damascus, met his cousin, and told him that he was present in Medina in the incident of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s murder. He came to Kufa with Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and he is completely aware of the situation.

They discussed and decided that both of them should visit Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** the next day and inform him about the episode. Habis introduced his cousin and said that he was present on the day of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s murder and had come to Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** with Ali and is completely honest in his words. Muʿawiyah looked to the man and said, "Let me know about the incident of Uthman." So, the man in a condensed sentence described the incident of Uthman's murder as follows: "Makshuh surrounded him and Hakim ordered the attack. Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** participated in his killing and three persons, Adi ibn Hatam, Malik and Amr ibn al-Hamq were active in this incident. Likewise, Talhah and al-Zubayr were involved actively. The cleanest person of this group is Ali who didn't play any role in this event."

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** asked, "What happened after that?"

The man told, "After Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s murder, while his dead body was still upon the ground, people stormed Ali like moths in a manner that shoes were lost, cloaks were fallen from shoulders, and the old people were trampled under their feet. All of tem made allegiance with Ali as the caliph and leader. When Talhah and al-Zubayr

broke their pledge of fealty, the Imam prepared to move and his right-wing Emigrants and Helpers accompanied him. This movement came hard upon three persons, Saʿd ibn Malik, Abdullah ibn Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Muhammad ibn Maslamah;**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and all of three decided to be isolated. Ali, with the help of this prime group, became needless of these three persons. On his way, he reached the quarter of the Tay tribe and a group of my tribe joined him. Midway, he was informed about the path Talhah and al-Zubayr had taken to Basra, so he dispatched a group to Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and they too accepted his invitation and started moving. He defeated the rebels and moved to Kufa. There was tumultuous uproar in the city, the children ran towards his place and the old and young people came to him joyfully. Right now, he is in Kufa and except for taking over Damascus, he doesn't have anything else in his mind."

When the man ended his words, fear overtook Muʿawiyah to whom **Error! Bookmark not defined.**Habis said, "My cousin is a great poet. He recited verses relevant to the incidents of our discussion, changed my views about Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and bestowed exaltedness upon Ali." Muʿawiyah requested him to recite those verses and, after hearing them, the morale of Muʿawiyah was totally shattered. He looked at Habis and said, "This man could be a spy of Ali; remove him from Damascus as soon as possible." Once again, Muʿawiyah invited him and said, "Inform me what people did." He repeated his words and Muʿawiyah, hearing his delicate and wise talk, was filled with astonishment.

Seeking the help of the Companions' children

When Muʿawiyah learned about the entrance of Ubaydullah ibn Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** into Damascus to escape the justice of Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** for killing Harmazan**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, he exploded with joy. He consulted his advisor and both decided to request him to go upon the pulpit and curse Ali. When Ubaydullah entered the court, Muʿawiyah said to him, "Oh my nephew, your father's name is in front of you. With widely opened eyes and full capacity of your mouth, speak, for you are respected and trusted among people. Sit on the pulpit and curse Ali and declare that he had killed Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**."

The personality of the Imam (ʿa) was so exalted that even enemies were unable to deny it. Ubaydullah looked at Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and said, "I don't have the courage to curse and insult Ali. He is

the son of Hashim. What should I say about his lineage? Regarding his spiritual and physical power, it is sufficient to say that he is a valiant warrior who crushed his enemy. The only thing that I can do is to put Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s blood upon his neck."

Ubaydullah left the assembly and Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** looked at Amr and said, "If he hadn't killed Harmazan**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and hadn't been scared of the justice of Ali, he would have never come to us. Didn't you see how he praises Ali?"

Ubaydullah delivered the speech and when his words reached Ali (ʿa), he said nothing and came down from the pulpit. Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** sent him a message: "My nephew! Your silence about Ali was due to two reasons; incompetence or treason." He replied, "I didn't want to testify against a person who never participated in Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s killing and even if I had said it, people would not have accepted it from me." Muʿawiyah was unhappy with his reply, left him and didn't award any position or honor to him. Ubaydullah changed his words and said, "Although Ali didn't play any role in Uthman's killing, Uthman's killers surrounded him and he neither praised their work nor condemned it. Regarding Uthman, I testify that he was killed in a condition when he had already repented for his deeds."

Such flexibility from Ubaydullah was sufficient for Muʿawiyah;**Error! Bookmark not defined.** so, he appointed him as one of his courtiers.

Problem of handing over Uthman*Error! Bookmark not defined.****'s killers***

The greatest reason Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** gave for opposing and gathering an army for combat against Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was that the Imam (ʿa) supported Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s killers. The people who had received notorious injustice at the hands of Uthman had besieged him, but the real killers were other than them. Muʿawiyah wanted the besiegers because they had paid allegiance to Ali (ʿa) and were strongly against the Umayyads ruling over Muslims. The following events throw more light upon the situation.

Fighting against Imam Ali (ʿa) wasn't an easy task. It was due to this reason that when Abu-Muslim al-Khawalani who lived in Damascus became aware of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s endeavors to combat with Imam Ali (ʿa), he**Error! Bookmark not defined.** came to him accompanied by a group of reciters of the Holy Quran and asked, "Why do

you want to fight Ali when you are no match to his exalted position on any scale? You have possessed neither his companionship with the Holy Prophet (s),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** nor his precedence to Islam, nor his immigration, nor his relationship with the Prophet (s)." Muʿawiyah said, "I never claim that I possess distinctions like Ali, but do you know that Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was killed as an oppressed?" "Yes, we know," they said and Muʿawiyah continued, "Let Ali hand over his killers to me so that I can punish them. Then I don't have to fight him."

Abu-Muslim and his sympathizers requested him to write a letter to Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** did and gave it to Abu-Muslim, who came to Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and handed over the letter to Ali (ʿa), saying, "You have assumed a task upon your shoulders that, by God, I never wish it belongs to any other than you, but Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** has been wrongfully killed. Hand over his killer to us and you are our leader and Imam. If one opposes you, our hands will come to your help and our tongues will stand witness for you; thus, you will be immune."

The Imam (ʿa) said, "Visit me tomorrow and take the reply of your letter." The next day, Abu-Muslim came to the Imam (ʿa) and saw a huge group standing outside armed to their teeth. All of them chanted, "We are Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s killers."

Abu-Muslim witnessed this scene, went inside to the Imam (ʿa) and said, "I saw a group. Do they have some association with you?" The Imam (ʿa) asked, "What have you seen?" and Abu-Muslim answered, "A group has been informed that you want to hand over Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s killers to me; therefore, they have gathered armed and cried that all of them had hands in Uthman's killing." Imam Ali (ʿa) replied, "By God, I have not decided even for a second to hand them over. I carefully investigated this issue and saw that it was not correct to hand them over to you or anyone else."

The killers of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** possessed a high position and their handing over to anyone would have resulted in an uprising and severe bloodshed. This congregation and solidarity was a natural thing. Abu-Muslim expressed his assignment openly in a gathering and this news was circulated and the revolutionaries who had been harassed by the tyranny and oppression of the governors of the Umayyad

caliph had spilled his blood and were definitely united.

The request for retaliation is relevant to the guardians of the killed who were the children of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and not Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who had distant ties with him and wanted to use his murder only as a ploy for his own interests.

PREPARATIONS FOR FIGHTERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

Marching to al-Nukhaylah garrison

The time had arrived for the Imam (ʿa) to enter the field with absolute determination and to uproot the damned tree of corruption. On the first of Shawwal, 36 A.H., he decided to dispatch the forces and before that invited the Emigrants and Helpers who had moved from Medina to join him to hold consultations, thus applying God's command: *"Practice consultation in your affairs*. [Surah Al-Imran 3, verse 159]*"*

He wrote to them, "You are the holders of blessed opinion, mature and dignified, announcers of truth and possessors of the righteous character of our society. We want to move to face your and our enemy. Let us know your opinion."

Among the group of Emigrants, Hashim ibn Utbah stood up and said, "O Commander of the Faithful, we know the family of Abu-Sufyan**Error! Bookmark not defined.** very well. They are enemies of you and your followers and seekers of worldly pleasures. They want to fight you for the world and power which they possess in their hands. They aren't willing to give up any thing whatsoever, and they don't have any other aim except this. In order to deceive some simple-minded people, they have made the blood of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** an excuse but they lie and don't seek revenge of his blood. They only desire the world. Move towards them and if they respond to truth, so far so good, but if they want sedition and war, and I assume that it will not be the otherwise, we will fight them."

Ammar ibn Yasir about whom the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** had said, "Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** is with the truth and the truth is with Ammar and when he turns, truth also turns with him," stood up and said, "O Commander of the Faithful, if it is possible not to pause even for one day, don't pause. Move us before the corrupt individuals ignite the fire of war and oppose the truth. Invite them to whatever is prosperous for them. If they accept, so far so good, and in case they offer resistance, we will fight them. By God, spilling of their blood and fighting against them will result in our nearness to God and will be a divine grace upon us."

The speeches of these two personalities from the Emigrants clarified the

ground to a certain extent. Now it was the time for personalities from the Helpers to express their point of view. At this moment, Qays ibn Sa'd stood up and spoke, "Lead us swiftly to the enemy that, by God, fighting with them is more pleasant for us than fighting the Romans. They practice deceit in their religion and consider God's saints, the Emigrants and Helpers and those who follow them with righteousness, as wretched and downcast. They consider our belongings as permissible for them to take and consider us their servants."

Sahl ibn Hunayf said, "O Commander of the Faithful, we are your friends and friends of your friends and enemies of your enemies. But it is necessary to share this task with the people of Kufa.**Error! Bookmark not defined.** Invite them to move and inform them about the privileges that they have been blessed with since they are regarded as the people of this land and its tribes. If they respond positively to your call, your aim and objective will materialize. We don't disagree with your point of view at all. Whenever you invite us, we will follow; and whatever you order us, we will obey."

Sahl's words indicated his maturity. The Emigrants and Helpers who were present with the Imam ('a) were counted as the elites of the Islamic community and their announcement of solidarity could motivate the community, but at the same time, the army of the Imam ('a) was made up of Iraqis and among them were chiefs of tribes without whose declaration of solidarity, organizing an army of one hundred thousand wasn't possible. The Imam ('a) first consulted the Emigrants and Helpers because they were the founders of his government as well as respected by all Muslims, and without their inclination, it was not possible to get the inclination of the Iraqi people.

Imam Ali's sermon*Error! Bookmark not defined.*

Imam Ali ('a) turned the consultation meeting into a large assembly after Sahl's proposal, went upon the pulpit, and addressed the huge congregation, "Move to face the enemies of God, the enemies of the Prophet's traditions and the enemies of the Quran. They are the remaining elements of the infidel tribes and killers of the Emigrants and Helpers."

At that point, a man from the Fazar tribe stood up and said, "Do you want us to move to Damascus in order to fight with our own brothers? You moved us to Basra and killed our brothers from Basra. No, by God, we will not do such a thing."

Malik al-Ashtar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** suddenly stood up from his place and said, "Who is this man?" When these words came out from Malik's mouth, necks were turned to that man and he fled because of the fear of people and took refuge in the marketplace. The angered masses like a storm beat him with fists, legs and swords hit him so much that he ultimately died. When the news of his death reached the Imam (ʿa), he became sad. His rudeness did not demand that he should be killed in such a terrible manner. Islamic justice required that investigations should be made about his killer and it was found that he had been killed by a group of people from the Hamdan tribe and not a specific killer. Imam Ali (ʿa) said, "This is a blind murder whose killer isn't known. Its blood money should be paid from the public treasury," and he did so.

This unexpected happening resulted in the sadness of the Imam (ʿa) and in spite of paying the blood money from the public treasury the effects of sadness were still apparent upon his face. Malik al-Ashtar,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** his most sincere friend, stood up, praised God and said, "This incident shouldn't shake you and the words of this unfortunate traitor shouldn't disappoint you. This huge group you can see in front of you are your followers; they want nothing except you and they don't like living after you. If you want to lead us to the enemy, then by God whoever is scared of death is never rescued from it and whoever desires life is not given it, and no one except a vicious person wants to live with the enemy. We know that no one dies but his death arrives. Why shouldn't we fight with the group that you described as enemies of the Prophet's traditions and the Quran and killers of the Emigrants and Helpers? A group of them yesterday in Basra rebelled against a tribe of Muslims and angered them; the earth became darkened as a result of their shameful deeds. They sold their reward of eternal abode for the insignificant items of this world."

Hearing these words of Malik, the Imam (ʿa) looked to the people and said, "This path is general and people are equal in front of truth. The one with this opinion seeks welfare for society; God rewards him in accordance with his intentions; the issue of that man is now finished." Having said this, he came down from the pulpit.

Syrian spies in Imam Ali's army

Buying commanders and forces were the ancient tactics of great powers against their opponents and Muʿawiyah was the genius of his period in this skill. In view of a group, accomplishing their objective through all

legitimate or illegitimate means is politics and the ends justify the means. Simple-minded people who find the apparent situation of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** better than Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** accused the Imam (ʿa) of incompetence in political principles and say that Muʿawiyah was more skilled in politics. The Imam (ʿa) replied to the criticism of this group ignorant of politics, saying, "By God, Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** isn't more skilled in politics than I am; rather, he practices deceit and commits sins, and only because that I dislike deceit, I would be the most skillful politician of all people. Deceit is a sin; sin is infidelity, and on the Day of Judgment every deceitful person will be identified by a specific banner."

In order to prove the veracity of the above words, a few samples of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s trickery in sending influential elements inside the Imam's army shall be mentioned. The uproar and enthusiasm for combat against Muʿawiyah that the Imam's speech created among the congregation is beyond description until one of the unfiltered elements of Muʿawiyah's influence, because of lack of decency, was trampled under hands and feet and his killer wasn't identified. This scene caused other infiltrated elements to think carefully about their forthcoming assignments and select other methods in order to create doubt and discord in the Imam's lines.

Two elements, one from the Abs tribe and another from the Tamim tribe, decided to present themselves as well-wishers in order to create difference of opinion among the companions of the Imam. Each one of them prepared a group of sympathizers from his tribe and came to the Imam (ʿa). In the beginning, Hanzalah of the Tamim tribe stood up and said, "We have come as well-wishers to you and hope that you will accept us. We think that you and those who are in your company should communicate with this man and not make haste to combat the Syrians. By God, no one knows who will be victorious and who will be defeated."

The other man, like Hanzalah, uttered the same words and the individuals who had come with them supported them. The Imam (ʿa) replied, "God Almighty is the Inheritor of servants, lands, seven heavens and earth and all of us will return to Him. To whomever He wishes, he bestows power; and from whoever He wants, He takes it back. Whoever He likes, He makes respected; and whomever He wants, He makes wretched. Turning back from the enemy is the act of deviators and sinners even though apparently it results in their victory or defeat. By God, I am hearing the words of those

who are neither ready to identify what is good nor deny the forbidden."[1]

The Imam's words revealed the characteristics of these persons in the same assembly. Maʿqil al-Riyahi said, "These people haven't come as your well-wishers; rather, they have come to deceive. Beware of them because they happen to be your greatest enemies."[2]

Another man named Malik stood up and said, "Hanzalah communicates with Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. Permit me to arrest him until the day the war ends." Two other persons the Abs tribe said, "Reports have arrived that Abdullah has secret contacts and letters have been exchanged between them. You should arrest him or permit us to arrest him until the war ends."[3]

The declaration of these four people resulted in the spies falling upon their hands and feet and saying, "Is this the reward of one who rushes to your help and announces his opinion about you and your enemies?" Imam Ali (ʿa) said, "God is the judge between you and me; I leave you to Him and seek His help. Whoever wants to leave, may leave." The gathering dispersed. Only a few days had passed when a confrontation took place between Hanzalah and the elders of the Tamim tribe. Both the infiltrators, with a group, left Iraq for Damascus and joined Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. Imam Ali (ʿa) ordered that their homes should be destroyed because of the treason committed by them as a lesson for others.

Wait or move towards Damascus

All the commanders of the army and followers of Imam Ali's style and method were unanimous about one thing: the task of Muʿawiyah should be finished, except the companions of Abdullah ibn Masʿud. Among them, sincere and trusted companions of the Imam (ʿa), like Adi ibn Hatam and Zayd ibn al-Hussayn, desired waiting so that the problem might be solved through letters and negotiations. Adi said, "O Imam, if you consider it feasible, pause a little and permit them some time so that a letter could come from them and your dispatched representatives can negotiate with them. If they accept, they will be guided and peace is better for both parties, but if they insist upon their stubbornness, then move towards them."

(1) *Ibid.* 96; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* 3/175.

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) *Ibid.*

A majority of the heads of Imam of Ali's army were demanding swift movement towards Damascus and among them were Yazid ibn Qays, Zayyan ibn Nasr, Abdullah ibn Budyal, Amr ibn al-Hamq and Hujr ibn Adi. Abdullah ibn Budyal said, "They want to confront us because of two reasons: They want to escape from the establishment of equal rights among Muslims and desire discrimination in wealth and positions. They want to cling to the positions and titles they possess and don't want to give up the wealth which they have accumulated in their hands. How can Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** make allegiance with Ali (ʿa) who one day killed his brother, uncle, and grandfather in the Battle of Badr? By God, I don't think that they will be ready for surrender unless spears are broken upon their heads, swords split their heads, and iron hammers scatter their brains."

Abdullah's reasons clearly manifested that any sort of delay would result in the interest of the enemy and loss for the Imam (ʿa) and his companions. Then, Yazid said, "Combatants don't give in to laziness and sleep, never give up the victory that they have achieved, and never say today and tomorrow."(1)

Self-control

In the meantime, news reached the Imam (ʿa) that Amr ibn al-Hamq and Hujr ibn Adi had alienated themselves from the people of Syria and cursed them. The Imam (ʿa) assigned one to prevent them from this task. After hearing the Imam's message, they came to him and said, "Why do you stop us from such an act? Didn't they belong to the pagans?" The Imam (ʿa) replied, "They did, but I don't want you to belong to the people who curse and alienate. Instead, speak of their bad deeds and that would be much more effective and better than cursing them. Say: O God, save our and their blood from being shed and establish peace between us and them. Save them from deviation so that one who is ignorant about our right is made aware of it. It would make me happier and be better for you."

Both of them accepted the Imam's advice and Amr ibn al-Hamq expressed his affection with the Imam (ʿa) as follows: "I didn't make allegiance with you because of bonds of kinship or greed for position and wealth; rather, my allegiance was given because of your possessing five great distinctions; they have placed the rope of your affection upon my neck: You are the cousin of the Prophet (s), the first person who believed in him, your wife is

(1) *Ibid*. 3/177; Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, pages 98-102.

the most distinguished among all ladies of this community, and you possess the greatest share in the fights among the Emigrants. By God, if they ask me to dig out the greatest mountain from their place or empty the water of oceans full of waves, until the day I am able to help you and destroy your enemies, even then I will not be satisfied that I have done my duty towards you."

Imam Ali (ʿa) witnessed the sincerity of Amr and prayed, "O God, illuminate his heart and guide him to the right path. Alas! There are not even ten people like you in my army."

Having consulted, heard positive and negative opinions, Imam Ali (ʿa), obeying the command of the Quranic verse: *"Consult before taking a decision, then trust in God,"* he decided to take the decision. He ordered that all surplus wealth and material resources that the governors of provinces had at their disposal should be gathered to be utilized for the expenses of the army moving towards Damascus.

A military campaign is possible only when three things are well-prepared; manpower and brave soldiers, competent commanders, and sufficient budget.

Inviting and testing people together with the positive response of a majority of groups from the tribes of Iraq provided the prime pillar of the military campaign. To motivate them, Imams al-Hasan and Husayn (ʿa), as well as Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Yasir and other loyal companions, delivered speeches on different occasions. For the second pillar, the Imam (ʿa) wrote letters to competent individuals and invited them to participate in the battle. the presence of such individuals tremendously increased the military strength of the army. In this respect, the following letter was written to the governor of Isfahan: "Peace be upon you. Praise be to God that there is no god except Him. A campaign against one who has deviated from the truth and gone into a deep sleep of darkness and misguidance is mandatory upon religious people. Whoever God is contented with, He makes contented; and He is angered with whomever opposes Him. We have decided to move to the people that act opposite to what has been ordered, allocate public treasury specifically to themselves, kill the truth, make corruption manifest, and select those as their confidants who are disobedient to God. If one of the friends of God criticizes their innovations, they consider him as their enemy, banish him from his native land, and deprive him of the public treasury; and if a tyrant supports them, they consider him as their friend, make him their courtier,

and help him. They insist upon oppression and opposition to the religion and have done so since ancient days so that they could prevent people from the truth and spread tyranny and sin. When this letter reaches you, hand over your task to a trusted deputy and rush towards me. Perhaps, you may encounter this deceitful enemy, encourage him to goodness, and discourage him from doing the forbidden. We all are not needless of the reward for campaigns."

As soon as the letter reached the governor, he appointed two people close to him, assigned the affairs of Isfahan to Harith ibn Abi'l-Harith, and the affairs of Hamdan which on that day were under Isfahan to Sa'id ibn Wahab, and he joined the Imam.

The Imam ('a) wrote another letter to Ibn Abbas and requested him for the surplus in the public treasury and after making those in his surroundings needless, he should send its remaining to Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. The public treasury of Kufa wasn't sufficient to bear all the expenses of a war and naturally help had to be taken from other provinces.

Manpower wasn't in shortage but infiltrated elements and cowardly individuals attempted to decrease the fervor of the soldiers for the path of truth by creating depression and doubt. To counter this, the Imam ('a) and his dearest sons al-Hasan and al-Husayn delivered sermons to strengthen the morale of the army from the beginning of the movement in the Nukhaylah garrison.

Occasionally, distinguished personalities and martyrdom-seekers like Hashim ibn Utbah, Sa'd in Abi-Waqqas**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s nephew, delivered speeches among the congregation and insisted that the Imam ('a) dispatch them to fight against the group that turned their backs to the Book of God and distorted the laws of God. He spoke with such warmth and compassion that the Imam ('a) prayed for him, saying, "O God, bless him with martyrdom and make him a companion of Your Prophet (s)."[1]

Hashim was the standard-bearer of the Imam ('a) in the Battle of Siffin**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and during the last days he drank the sherbet of martyrdom.

A group of companions of Abdullah ibn Mas'ud came to the Imam ('a) and said, "We will move with you and keep our tents at a distance from you in

(1) *Ibid*. 3/184.

order to keep monitoring your army and your opponents. Whenever we observe that one party is doing forbidden acts and transgressing, we will fight against them."

The position of the Imam during his entire life and government could have been uncontroversial, but unfiltered elements whispered in their hearts and made the righteous ones hesitant to fight against Muʿawiyah **Error! Bookmark not defined.**. Due to this consideration, the Imam (ʿa) said to them, "Congratulations! These are words of understanding the religion, truth and the traditions of the Prophet (s). Whoever is not contented with this is a rebel."

Another group of companions of Abdullah came and said, "While accepting your superiority in distinctions, we are in doubt about this war being permissible. If it is required that we should fight with the enemies, dispatch us to a distant place where we can fight with them." The Imam (ʿa) was not unhappy with their complaint and dispatched four hundred people of them under the supervision of Rabʿi to Rey where they could perform their obligation by helping the Islamic army that was in progress surrounding Khorasan. If this group due to some reason wasn't inclined towards a fight, the Imam (ʿa) refused the Bahilah tribe whose relations were strained with him. He paid their wages and ordered them to go to Daylam and perform their duties with their Muslim brothers on those boundaries.

The majority of Imam Ali's**Error! Bookmark not defined.** companions were from Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Basra and Yemen and the tribes living around these big cities. For the five tribes who entered the Nukhaylah garrison accompanied by Ibn Abbas, Imam Ali (ʿa) appointed five commanders-in-chief all of whom had come from Basra to Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** with Ibn Abbas.

Dispatching the vanguards

Appointment of commander ended and Imam Ali (ʿa) appointed **Error! Bookmark not defined.**Uqbah ibn Amr, who had precedence in Islam and was among those who had made allegiance with the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** under the tree, as his deputy and issued the order of alert. At this moment, the garrison of Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was full of soldiers. A group of people whom Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** had exiled in Kufa because they criticized the government gathered and shouted the slogans: "The time has arrived that those who were exiled from their homes should be ready for

combat against the enemy."[1]

At the start, the Imam (ʿa) dispatched two regiments of twelve thousand soldiers as vanguards to the path of Damascus and the commandership of one regiment of eight thousand was assigned to Ziyad and the other of four thousand to Hani; and ordered both of them that they should take the path of Damascus with perfect unity and camp wherever they encountered the enemy.

(1) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, page 121.

IMAM ALI MOVING TO SIFFIN

The al-Nukhaylah garrison was full of volunteers infused with the spirit of martyrdom and waiting to move. Imam Ali (ʿa),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** on Wednesday in Shawwal 36 A.H., entered the garrison and addressed the soldiers, "God be praised as long as nights, days, and stars set and rise. Praise be to God Whose bounties never disappear and favors never stop. Be it known to you that I have advanced(1) the vanguard of my armies with instructions to stay on the banks of the Euphrates and reach the group of people living on the banks of the Tigris so that I may make them fight the enemies of Islam and be of help to you.(2) Uqbah ibn Khalid(3) is now the commander of Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. I never separated my self from you and I have ordered Malik ibn Habib not to renounce the offenders and I left him behind until everybody joins you."(4)

At that moment, Maʿqil ibn Qays, a passionately zealous person, said, "By God, nobody commits offence but the doubtful, those who fail to ponder over the truth, and the hypocrites. It will be good if you order Malik to cut off the necks of the offenders."

The Imam (ʿa) said, "I have given him the relevant orders and, God willing, he will not disobey my orders."

Then, other groups wanted to speak, but the Imam (ʿa) didn't permit them and asked for his horse. When he put his feet upon the strap, he said, "In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful," and when he rode on it, he quoted, *"Glorified be He Who hath subdued these unto us, and we weren't capable (of subduing them). And Lo! Unto our Lord we are returning*. [43:13-14]*"*

He then prayed, "O God! I seek Your shelter from the tiredness of journey, burden of return, confusion after attaining certainty, and harmful

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(1) Imam Ali (ʿa) had already dispatched twelve thousand soldiers under the commands of Ziyad ibn Nasr and Shurayh ibn Hani.

(2) *Nahj al-Balaghah*, sermon 48; Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, page 131 (with minor difference). Imam Ali (ʿa) delivered this sermon outside Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** at the Garrison of al-Nukhaylah on the 25th of Shawwal, 37 A.H. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* 3/348.

(3) Al-Masʿudi, *Muruj al-Dhahab* 2/348.

(4) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, page 132.

inclination towards family and wealth. O God! You are my companion in my journey and the Overseer of my family and these two components don't combine in anyone except You, because an overseer can't accompany and a companion in journey can't be overseer of family at home."

Then, he moved while al-Hurr ibn Sahm moved ahead of him and recited epic verses. At that moment, Malik ibn Habib, chief of the Imam's security, took the bridle of his horse and said sorrowfully, "O my Imam, is it permissible that you move for fighting with Muslims and together with them earn the reward for fight for God's sake and leave me to gather the offenders?" The Imam (ʿa) replied, "Whatever reward is earned by this group, you are included in it. You are more useful here than accompanying us." He said, "O Commander of the Faithful, I have heard and I will obey your orders."

The Imam (ʿa) left Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and after crossing the bridge of Kufa looked at the people and said, "Those walking to see us off and those living at this point should offer complete prayer, but we are travelers and whoever is with us shouldn't take any mandatory fasting, and his prayer is shortened." Then he performed the Midday Prayer in the shortened form and continued his journey. When he reached Dayr Abu-Musa, he located at twelve kilometers and he offered two units of prayer and then said, "Glorious is God Who is the owner of all blessings and bounties. Glorious is God Who is the owner of power and compassion. I ask Him to make me contented with my fate, make me succeed in obedience to Him and be attentive to His command as He is the listener of prayers."(1)

At a place called Thars where a great canal of a branch of the Euphrates was passing, Imam Ali rode off to perform the Sunset Prayer. He then said, "Praise be to God Who makes the night enter into the day and makes the day enter into night. Praise be to God whenever darkness spreads all over. Praise be to God whenever a star appears and then declines."(2)

There, he rested for the night. At dawn, he performed the Dawn Prayer and continued on his path. When he reached a place and caught sight of the large date-palm trees that were located behind the canal, he recited this Quranic verse: "*And lofty date- palms with ranged clusters*. [50:10]"

He crossed the canal with his horse and rested for a while near a temple

(1) *Ibid.*

(2) *Ibid*.

that belonged to Jews.

Passing through Karbala'*Error! Bookmark not defined.*

Imam Ali (ʿa) passed through the land of Karbala' on his journey from Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to Siffin**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. "He dismounted on the land of Karbala' and offered prayers with us. When he accomplished the prayer, he picked a little bit of soil, smelled it and said, 'Be blessed, O dust of Karbala', for a group will be associated with you and without accounting will enter paradise.' He then pointed with his finger to this and that point and said, 'Here and there.'"

Saʿd ibn Wahab asked, "What do you mean by this?" and he replied, "A precious family will dismount here. Woe be upon those among you," repeating it twice. We asked, "What do you mean?" and he replied, "Woe betide those among you who will kill them! Woe betide those who will enter fire for killing them!"(1)

According to another narration, the Imam (ʿa) stood on the land of Karbala'**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and said, "This is the land of sorrow and calamities." Pointing at a specific place, he said, "This is the place of their landing and the place of their camping." Pointing at another point, he said, "Here will they be slain."

Harthamah narrated: "The war of Siffin ended and I returned to my living native place and shared the report of the Imam (ʿa) with my wife who was loyal to him. I asked, "How does the Imam know the unseen?" My wife replied, "Leave me alone and know that the Imam doesn't speak anything but the truth." Time passed and Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad dispatched a huge army to fight with al-Husayn and I was in that army. When I reached the land of Karbala'**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, I remembered the Imam's words and was extremely sad about this happening. I ran my horse towards the tent of Imam al-Husayn (ʿa), went to him and reported that incident. He asked, "Are you with me or them?" I said, "I am neither with you nor with them. I have left my family in Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and I am very much scared of Ubaydullah." He said, "Leave this place as soon as possible because by God Who possesses the soul of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** in His hand, whoever hears my cry for help and doesn't help me, God will throw him into fire." Therefore, I immediately left that point in order not to see the day of his

(1) *Ibid.* pages 140-2; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* 3/169-70.

martyrdom."[1]

Imam Ali at Sabat and al-Mada'in*Error! Bookmark not defined.*

Imam Ali (ʿa) left the land of Karbala'**Error! Bookmark not defined.** for Sabat where nothing was left from the remnants of Khosrow's palace. At this moment, one of his companions, al-Hurr ibn Sahm, recited some poetic verses:

The fall winds breezed swiftly upon their lands

It seems they were committed to their promise.

Imam Ali (ʿa) said, "You should have said these Quranic verses: *How many were the gardens and the water-springs that they left behind and the corn lands and the goodly sites. And pleasant things wherein they took delight! Even so (it was), and We made it an inheritance for their folk; and the heaven and the earth wept not for them, nor were they reprieved.* [44:25-9]"

He then added, "The second groups were inheritors but they went and others became inheritors. This group didn't thank God for the blessings and because of their ingratitude for the divine bounties were taken from them. Stay away from being unthankful of the bounties and be saved from calamities." Then he ordered that the army should dismount at an elevated point near al-Mada'in where **Error! Bookmark not defined.**the Imam (ʿa) ordered al-Harith to announce in the city that whoever was capable of fighting should present himself before the Commander of the Faithful at the time of the Afternoon Prayer. Strong people came to see the Imam (ʿa) who delivered a speech, starting it with statements of praising and thanking God. He then said, "I am really astonished at your offence for not participating in the fight, being separated from the people of the region, and living oppressed in the land of tyrants. You neither bid the right nor forbid the wrong."

The farmers of al-Mada'in excused, "We were waiting for your orders. Whatever you want, order us."

Imam Ali (ʿa) ordered Adi ibn Hatam to stop there and move towards Siffin accompanied by them. Adi left al-Mada'in after three days together with three hundred people, but ordered his son Yazid to stay over there and join the Imam (ʿa) with the second group. He too joined the Imam (ʿa)

(1) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, pages 140-1; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* 3/169.

accompanied by four hundred people.

Peasants of al-Anbar*Error! Bookmark not defined.* ***welcome Imam Ali****Error! Bookmark not defined.*

The Imam (ʿa) left al-Mada'in **Error! Bookmark not defined.** for al-Anbar whose people rushed to welcome him once they learned about his arrival. When they met the Imam (ʿa), they dismounted from their horses and started running, bowing and making signs of humility. The Imam (ʿa) asked, "What is this act which you just performed and why have you brought these animals with you?"

They replied, "This is our tradition of showing respect to elders. We have also arranged food for you and your soldiers as well as fodder for your animals."

The Imam (ʿa) said, "By God, your tradition of showing respect to your elders is not good for them and you put yourself in hardship and trouble. You should never repeat this act again. The animals that you have brought with you are acceptable with the condition that they should be accounted as your taxes and revenue. The food that you have prepared could be acceptable only after payment of its expenses."

People said, "You accept it; we will assess its price and then take it from you."

The Imam (ʿa) said, "In that case, you will sell them for less than the real price."

They asked, "Our Imam, we have among us our Arab friends and acquaintances. Would you prevent us from giving gifts to them and prevent them from accepting them?"

The Imam (ʿa) said, "All Arabs are your friends but not everyone deserves to accept your heavy gifts. If anyone loses his temper upon you, inform me."

They said, "Our Imam! Please accept our gifts. We will like it if you accept our gifts."

The Imam (ʿa) said, "We are more needless than you."

Having said this sentence, he continued his journey and reminded them of God's justice for those people who have lived for years under the yoke of oppression of Persian kings and the outcome of their painful efforts was always presented to their rulers. When he reached al-Jazirah, the tribes of

Taghlib and Namr welcomed him. The Imam (ʿa) only permitted one of his commanders, Yazid ibn Qays, to utilize their food and water because he was from those tribes. The Imam (ʿa) then reached al-Riqqah and dismounted at the bank of the Euphrates. A monk living in his monastery learned about his arrival and went to meet him. He said, "A scripture from the inheritance of my ancestors has reached my hand that was written by the companions of Jesus and I have brought it with me in order to recite it before you."

He recited, "In the Name of God; the Beneficent, the Merciful. God Who in the past destined and written that among the people who can be taught, He will send a Prophet to teach them the Book and wisdom, guide them to the path of God, announce monotheism in bazaars, not punish evil with harshness but forgive. His followers will praise God on reaching high and low points. God will make him victorious upon his enemies. When God will take him, his community will be divided but will again become united and remain in this condition, then be divided again. A man from his community will pass through this Euphrates who bids the right and forbids the wrong, judges with truth, and doesn't accept bribery and wages. The world in his eyes is less valuable than the dust in the path of a strong wind, and death for him is sweeter than a thirsty person drinking water. He fears God in secret and is sincere to Him openly. In the execution of God's command, he isn't scared of criticism and criticizers. Whoever from this area sees that Prophet and believes in him, his reward is My pleasure and Paradise; and whoever sees this righteous servant and helps him and gets killed in his path, achieves martyrdom."

When that monk finished recital of that scripture, he added, "Now, I am at your service and I will not separate myself from you so that whatever happens to you happens to me." Having heard these words, the Imam (ʿa) wept and said, "Thank God for He hasn't placed me among the forgotten ones. Praise be to God for He has mentioned me in the books of the righteous." From that moment, the monk was continuously in the Imam's saddle until he received martyrdom in the Battle of Siffin. The Imam (ʿa) prayed upon his dead body, buried him and said, "This man is from my family." Since then, he repeatedly prayed God to forgive him.

Imam Ali in al-Riqqah

The Imam (ʿa) **Error! Bookmark not defined.**dispatched three thousands soldiers to al-Riqqah under the command of Maʿqil ibn Qays**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and ordered him to take the path

to Mosul, then Nasibin, and finally dismount at al-Riqqah and meet him there. The aim was to reinforce the power of the ruler of this region; therefore, he ordered the commander not to fight with anyone on their path, try to make the people of that region comfortable and hopeful, travel in the morning and afternoon and utilize midday and midnight for rest, and provide comfort and safety for himself and the soldiers under his command as well as their animals. The commander traveled as recommended by the Imam (ʿa) and when he arrived at al-Riqqah, he found him already there.

The Imam's companions thought that it would be expedient if the Imam writes a letter to Muʿawiyah and once more completes the argument upon him. The Imam (ʿa) accepted their proposal because he wanted Muʿawiyah's mutiny to be resolved without bloodshed even though he knew that it was useless to advise those infatuated with power. When the Imam's letter reached Muʿawiyah, he replied with threat of war. The Imam (ʿa) became more determined and ordered the army to move from al-Riqqah to Siffin.

The problem the Imam (ʿa) faced was crossing the Euphrates without constructing a bridge or by boat. He requested the people of al-Riqqah to provide the means for him and his soldiers to cross the river, but they were opposed to the people of Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined. Error! Bookmark not defined.**and refused to build the bridge. The Imam (ʿa) at the peak of power didn't show any reaction to their refusal and decided to cross his army through a bridge that was located at a distant point. Malik al-Ashtar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** shouted at them and threatened to destroy the fort in which they had taken asylum. As they knew that Malik would do that, they immediately announced their readiness to install the bridge and the Imam (ʿa) and his infantry with their consignment crossed the region and the last person was Malik.

The Imam (ʿa) left Iraq and entered Damascus. To avoid any probable attack or trickery,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** he dispatched his two powerful commanders to Muʿawiyah's army, but their efforts proved fruitless and both the commanders wrote letters to the Imam (ʿa), asking for his orders.

Having read their letters, the Imam (ʿa) immediately called Malik and said, "Ziyad and Shurayh have written this. As soon as possible, join them and take over their supervision, but until you don't see the enemy and don't hear their words, don't start the fighting, but do respond if they start the

fighting. Your wrath and resentment shouldn't result in your starting the war, but if you hear their words repeatedly and your argument with them has completely ended, then order it: Assign Ziyad as commander of the right wing, Shurayh as the commander of the left wing and place yourself at the center of the army. Do not be so close to the enemy that they think that you are about to ignite the fire of war and do not remain so distant that they imagine you are scared. Position yourself in this manner until I join you."(1)

He wrote letters and described Malik as follows, "Both the commanders should know that I have assigned Malik as the commander-in-chief. Listen to and obey him, because his intelligence and passion are beyond doubt. He does not act slowly at time of haste and does not rush at times demanding to be slow. I have ordered him, the way I ordered you, not to start fighting against the enemy without inviting them to the truth and completing the argument upon them."

Malik speedily arrived at the front battlefield and organized the position of the army. After that, he did nothing except defending his army whenever an attack occurred. It is really astonishing that Muʿawiyah refused Malik's proposal that he should come to combat personally in order to avoid bloodshed. In the middle of a dark night, the army of Muʿawiyah retreated swiftly and positioned itself in a vast land on the bank of the river and blocked the way to its water in the face of the Imam's army.

Reports reached Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** that Imam Ali (ʿa) had crossed the river accompanied by a huge army. Muʿawiyah who had already coordinated with the people of Damascus went upon the pulpit and informed them about the Imam's movement accompanied by the warriors of Basra and Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and induced them to defend themselves and their children. Then, other individuals who had been trained for this task arose to support Muʿawiyah. Ultimately, Muʿawiyah started moving and settled behind his advancing forces under the command of Abu'l-Aʿwar and made it his garrison. According to narrations, forty thousand people were assigned to prevent the Imam's soldiers from nearing the Euphrates.

Soon, Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** entered Siffin and joined the advance forces of his army under the command of Malik al-Ashtar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. When he landed in Siffin, the

(1) *Ibid*.

enemy had already positioned a huge army between his solders and the river cutting off his soldiers from the possibility of access to water.

The storage of water in the Imam's army was decreasing and the commander of Muʿawiyah's army had closed the access to water for the cavalry and infantry. Shooters were positioned ahead of them and lancers in their surroundings. Ultimately, the pressure of thirst overwhelmed the Imam's army and brought the compliant to his presence.

Every commander gives up his self-composure in such a situation and issues the order to attack, but Imam Ali (ʿa) who had aimed at resolving the issue without bloodshed asked one his confident companions to go to Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and say, "We came to this region without any desire to start fighting, while you came with power from Damascus and started fighting. I see that you should not start fighting before you listen to my arguments. What is this unmanly act of positioning yourself between us and water? Remove the obstruction so that you can think about our position. If you prefer that the situation remains as it is and individuals should fight for water and ultimately the victorious group utilize it, we have nothing to say."

Saʿsaʿah, the Imam's ambassador, entered Muʿawiyah's tent that was located in the heart of the army and forwarded the message. Darkened hearts like that of al-Walid ibn Uqbah supported closing the Euphrates so that the Imam's army should die of thirst, but the old man of politics, Amr, opposed the Umayyads and said to Muʿawiyah, "Let the water be open for the soldiers and think about other military means."

According to another narration, he said, "This act is not practical; you are saturated and Ali is thirsty, while there is an army under his control looking at the water of the river. Ultimately, they will either dominate it or die. You know that Ali is a brave crusher and the people of Iraq and Hijaz are in his saddle. Ali is the man that on that day when the house of Fatimah was attacked said: If I had only forty people with me, I would have taken revenge from the transgressors."

While Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** considered closing the water upon the Imam's army as his prime victory, a friend of Amr looked at him and said, "Glory be to God! How strange this is! You arrived earlier than the army of Iraq to this point and became the reason for closing water upon them. By God, if they had come here earlier, they would not have closed the water upon you. The greatest task you are committing is that you have deprived them of water temporarily but wait for the other situation

when they could also punish you in the same manner. Don't you know that among them are slaves, maids, workers and the feeble people? By God, your act is shameful oppression and tyranny. Muʿawiyah, with this shameful act, you have awakened and enlightened the cowardice of double-minded individuals and made the one who doesn't have any reason to fight you courageous."(1)

Muʿawiyah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** contrary to many of the occasions where he usually showed maturity and self-control against being criticized, shouted at the man and complained to Amr about his behavior. Amr also behaved harshly with him, but prosperity had shown itself to that man and he saw the horizon of Muʿawiyah's army intensely dark and in the middle of the night left and joined the Imam's army.

Lack of water and thirst severely threatened the Imam's soldiers and he experienced pain and sorrow. Since he came near the camp of the Midhaj tribe, he heard a soldier saying:

Does the Syrian army prevent us from water?

When, we are equipped with lances and coat of arms?

The Imam (ʿa) went near the camp of the Kindah tribe and heard another soldier near the tent of al-Ashʿath ibn Qays saying:

If today al-Ashʿath doesn't remove death from us,

From the people who are involved in torture and pain.

We, with the swords would drink the water,

Therefore it is better if he orders us before our death.

The Imam (ʿa) returned to his tent and suddenly al-Ashʿath entered and said, "Is it correct that the people of Damascus prevent us from water while you are among us and we do possess swords? By God, permit us either to open the path to the river or be killed in this path; and order Malik to take position with his soldiers." The Imam (ʿa) replied, "You have the choice." Then he selected a point where Malik should take positions with his forces and then delivered a short but fiery and stimulating sermon that the Imam's army in an exhilarating attack were able to remove Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s army to one side and take control over the river. The text of that short sermon is as follows: "The army of your enemy has challenged you to battle for water. You may either

(1) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, page 60 with minor variation: Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah* 1/94; *Tarikh al-Yaʿqubi* 2/188; *Tarikh al-Tabri* 3/240.

accept the defeat and the resulting humiliation or accept the challenge and wet your swords with the blood of your enemy and your throats with the water of the Euphrates. Remember that while defending Islam if you accept defeat and are subdued, such a life will be worse than death and if you die in defending your faith, then there is eternal life for you. Be aware that Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** has collected hordes of ignorant people whom he has misguided as much as possible and from whom he has hidden the true religion until they fanatically offered their throats as targets for the arrows of death."(1)

Al-Ashʿath with his regiment and Malik with his cavalry were positioned face to face. With an electrifying swift attack, they removed the barrier of the army that was twice in power from their path in a manner that the hoofs of the horses went inside the river. In this attack, twelve soldiers were killed, the page of war turned in the Imam's favor, and the river became under his control. At this juncture, Amr looked to Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and asked, "What will you do now if Ali behaves in a reciprocal manner and closes water upon you?"

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who was well aware about the munificence and exaltedness of the virtues of the Imam (ʿa) replied, "I don't think that he will close the water upon us because he has come here for another objective."

What then was the reaction of the Imam (ʿa) against the unmanly act of the Muʿawiyah?**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

The Euphrates fell under the control of the Imam's soldiers, while the soldiers of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** were pushed back to a derelict point. Continuation of life for the Syrians in these conditions wasn't possible, their water storage was ending soon and they were bound to select one of three alternatives:

1. To carry out another attack to occupy the canal, but they didn't feel confident.

2. To die of thirst and make Siffin their own graveyard.

3. To start fleeing and scatter around Damascus.

Such chaos and anxiety didn't appear among the heads of the Syrian army, especially Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, because of his

(1) *Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.**, sermon 51; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.** 3/244.

acquaintance with Imam Ali's munificence, manliness and commitment to Islam and its ethical principles. They knew that he would never sacrifice the principles of humanity, for he refused the rule of "the ends justify the means." Amr was completely opposed to this inhumane act of Muʿawiyah, but he opposed his advice until the canal came under the control of the Imam's soldiers and Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s army retreated. At that moment, these two old satanic politicians sat to discuss the situation:

Amr: "What will you do if the Iraqis close water upon you like you closed it upon them? Will you fight with them for water like the way they attacked you?"

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "Forget the past. What do you think of Ali?"

Amr: "I think that what you have considered permissible against him, he wouldn't consider it fair for you, because he hasn't come here to take control of the canal." (1)

Muʿawiyah's**Error! Bookmark not defined.** words saddened Amr who composed an anthem and said that the horizon is dark and it is quite possible that they would share Talhah and al-Zubayr's fate. Amr's guess was absolutely correct and the Imam (ʿa), after dominating the canal, kept the water of the canal open for all. This manner proved that even during fighting the bitterest enemy, he was committed to his ethical principles and, unlike Muʿawiyah, he never believed that the ends justify the means.

The aftermath

Both the armies took their positions at a special distance and waited for the orders of their commanders. The Imam (ʿa) was not ready for the fight and again dispatched representatives and wrote letters desiring to resolve the problem through negotiations.

In the last days of the month of Rabiʿ II, 36 A.H., Ubaydullah ibn Umar suddenly**Error! Bookmark not defined.** came to the Imam (ʿa). The Imam had not succeeded to convince Uthman to punish Ubaydullah; therefore, he had sworn to God that he would punish Ubaydullah as soon as he would have power to do it. After Uthman's murder, Ubaydullah, fearing punishment, left Medina to Damascus. Due to this precedence,

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah* 1/94; al-Masʿudi, *Muruj al-Dhahab* 2/386.

Ubaydullah entered the Imam's presence during the Battle of Siffin and in a taunting way said, "Thank God that He assigned you for the punishment of Harmazan's blood**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and me for the revenge of Uthman." The Imam (ʿa) replied, "God will join us in the battlefield." Incidentally, in the heat of fighting, Ubaydullah was killed by the Imam's soldiers.

FINAL ARGUMENTS

Dispatching three representatives to Mu'awiyah*Error! Bookmark not defined.*

The Imam (ʿa) called three personalities, one from the Helpers, another from the Hamdan tribe, and a third from the Tamim tribe, and asked them to go to Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and invite him to obey and join the Islamic community and follow God's command. The man of the Tamim tribe asked, "If he agrees to obey, will you give him distinctions (i.e. provincial government)?" The Imam (ʿa) never trampled the Islamic principles under any condition; so, he said, "Now go and see him, insist and find out what his opinion is."

The three persons came to Muʿawiyah and discussions took place between them:

The man of the Helper spoke, "The world has ended for you and soon you will be returning to another abode and God will judge you for your character and your advanced deposited deeds. I adjure you by God not to create divisions among the community and spill their blood."

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** intervened in the middle of his words and said, "Why don't you recommend these words to your elder?"

The man replied, "Glory be to God! My elder isn't like you. He is very highly superior to you in honesty, distinctions, precedence to Islam and relationship with the Prophet (s)."

Muʿawiyah asked, **Error! Bookmark not defined.**"What do you mean and what do you want?"

He answered, "I want to invite you to obey your cousin. This invitation will result in the safety or your religion and a prosperous end for you."

Muʿawiyah said, **Error! Bookmark not defined.**"In that case, vengeance of Uthman's**Error! Bookmark not defined.** blood is delayed. No, by God, I will never do such a thing."

At that moment, the other man of the Hamdan tribe wanted to speak, but the man of the Tamim tribe overtook him and said, "Your aim became clear during your discussion with our brother. Your goal is never hidden from us.

In order to deceive people and win their sentiments, you couldn't find anything but to say that your leader had been killed as oppressed and you needed to avenge his blood. Due to this reason, the ignorant groups have responded to your words while we know that you on purpose failed to help him and because of the same position you now desire considered his murder as permissible. Very often, there are people who want positions but God fails their purposes. How do you know that you will achieve your vicious desire? If you don't accomplish your desire, you will have the worst position and you will not accomplish it but deserve the entrance into the fire. Be afraid of God and renounce whatever you have and don't fight with those who are worthy of government."

His logical words aroused the anger of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who, losing self-control, replied, "O you rude and stubborn nomad! Arise from this assembly and leave, and between you and me there is no ruler except the sword."

The man of the Tamim tribe spoke, "Do you want to scare us with sword? Very soon I will bring my sword falling on you."

Then all of the three returned to the Imam (ʿa) and informed him about the result of negotiations.

During the early period of Islam, reciters of the Holy Quran possessed a distinguished position influencing the opinion of Muslims. Under conditions where there was no hope left for a peaceful agreement, reciters of Iraq and Syria camped at a particular point and their representatives continued to meet with the heads of the two groups. First, they went to Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and had the following discussions:

The representatives: "What do you want?"

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "I want retaliation upon those who shed Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s blood."

The representatives: "From whom?"

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "From Ali."

The representatives: "Did Ali kill him?"

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "Yes, he killed him and gave refuge to his killers."

The representatives came near the Imam (ʿa) and mentioned that

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** accused him of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s murder; so, he said, "By God, he is a liar, I did not kill Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**."

The representatives returned to Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and repeated the Imam's words.

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "He wasn't an overseer of it, but ordered and motivated people to kill Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**."

The Imam (ʿa) **Error! Bookmark not defined.**again denied any sort of interference in the murder of Uthman.

Muʿawiyah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** hearing the Imam's denial, mentioned another issue and said, "If such is the case, he should hand over the killers of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to me or leave my hand open to arrest them."

The Imam (ʿa) replied, "There is no retaliation in unintentional murders. The killers took the Quran as the reason for his killing, they explained their position and the caliph and the representatives disputed with each other and the caliph was killed while having the power in his hands."

When the representatives narrated his jurisprudential argument to Muʿawiyah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** he saw himself guilty; therefore, he started his argument with another excuse: "Why did Ali assume caliphate and deprive other of it without consulting us and those who are here?"

The Imam, "The people followed the Emigrants and Helpers, speaking the tongue of other Muslims who were scattered in the domain. They made allegiance with perfect desire, contentment and sincerity; I will never allow the likes of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to govern upon the Islamic community so that he should mount upon their loaf of bread and break their staffs."

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "All the Emigrants and Helpers weren't present in Medina; some of them lived in Syria. Why weren't they consulted?"

The Imam: "Selection of the caliph is not relevant to all Emigrants and Helpers scattered throughout the world; otherwise, selection wouldn't be possible. Instead, it is relevant to some of them who preceded others to Islam, participated in the Battle of Badr, and made allegiance with me."

Then looking to the representatives, he said, "Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** shouldn't deceive you and cause the destruction of your lives and religion."

The Emigrants and Helpers lived in different provinces. There was no means of communication to make all of them vote. Insistence upon it would only result in the disintegration of the Islamic government. There was no alternative except to suffice upon the majority of Emigrants and Helpers who lived in Medina. The first three caliphs were not questioned when they took charge, even if only three members of a council voted for one, only one Emigrant nominated the other, and the first caliph was selected without even waiting for the Emigrants and Helpers who were burying the Holy Prophet (s). In principle, it was not fair that only the opinion of Emigrants and Helpers should be the criteria, and if the possibilities of a referendum existed, they would not have any superiority as compared to the companions of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who had seen and believed in him and hadn't migrated. Why should the selection of caliph be in the hands of the companions and the other Muslims have no right to express their point of view in these affairs?

Fundamentally, the issue of leadership, from the point of view of the Imam (ʿa), was an issue of explicit divine appointment through the Prophet (s). Therefore, if the Imam (ʿa) spoke about the selection by Emigrants, Helpers and veterans of the Battle of Badr, it was presented for the satisfaction of his rival's own argument. It took months to dispatch a courier from one point to another. From this consideration, there was no other alternative except to suffice upon the contract of great personalities and veterans of the Battle of Badr.

Scattered attacks

Until the end of Jumada II, letters were sent and representatives dispatched, and scattered attacks (almost eighty-five) took place, but never ended in fighting or spilling of blood, because the reciters of the Quran intervened and separated them from each other.

In order to prevent bloodshed, two great companions went to Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and asked, "Why do you want to fight with Ali?" Muʿawiyah again repeated his old arguments whose replies he had heard repeatedly from the Imam (ʿa), yet both these people brought his objections to the Imam (ʿa). This time, the Imam replied to Muʿawiyah in another way and circulated among his companions that Muʿawiyah wanted the killers of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not**

defined.. Suddenly, twenty thousand people covered with iron and nothing of their bodies could be seen except their eyes came forward and claimed that they were the killers of Uthman. The two companions after seeing this scene left both groups not to see the disputes of bloodshed, while it was necessary to ponder over the truth and support it.

The month of Rajab arrived and the scattered attacks stopped. Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was scared that the reciters of the Holy Quran who had positioned their camp between the two armies might join Ali (ʿa). In order to shake up the order of the Imam's garrison, he thought about a fraud rare in the history of Islamic battles.

The garrison of the Imam's soldiers were positioned on the down stream side while the garrison of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was positioned on the upper stream side of the dyke that was built on the canal. Suddenly, by word of mouth, the news spread among the Imam's army that Muʿawiyah wanted to destroy the dyke and flood the Iraqi army. The method he used to spread this rumor was that he confidentially ordered his army to shoot an arrow towards the garrison of the Imam's soldiers carrying the warning letter which read: "From the well-wishing servant of God! I report that Muʿawiyah intends to destroy the dyke in order to drown all of you. As soon as possible, take your decision and don't give up prudence."

This warning reached the hands of one of the soldiers and was circulated by hand until the episode was publicized in the entire garrison and perhaps believed as correct. With the publicity of this rumor, Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** dispatched two hundred people towards the dyke with shovels, picks and baskets to pretend as though they were busy destroying the dyke. The Imam (ʿa) was aware about the deceit and trickery of Muʿawiyah; he said to his soldiers, "Muʿawiyah doesn't have the power to destroy the dyke. He wants to scare you so that you should leave your positions and he takes over the control of the Euphrates."

The heads of the army said, "It is not so, it is a serious matter and right now a group is busy digging to let the water down stream."

The Imam (ʿa) said, "O people of Kufa,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** don't be deceived by them, believe me."

The commanders replied, "By God, we are moving; if you want to stay here, you can."

All of them quit their garrison and selected a point located on a higher

elevation. The Imam (ʿa) was the last person to leave the region. But it was not long that the truth of the Imam's words became manifest as Muʿawiyah, **Error! Bookmark not defined.**with lightening speed, occupied the garrison of the Imam (ʿa) and surprised the Iraqi soldiers.

The Imam (ʿa) called the commanders who had opposed him and admonished them seriously. Al-Ashʿath apologized for his disobedience and promised that he would compensate for this defeat. Then, with the help of Malik al-Ashtar,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** they were able to move Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s army a few kilometers away from the occupied area and compensated for the defeat caused by their opposition. The Euphrates water came under the control of the Imam's army, but at that moment the Imam (ʿa) showed his benevolence and immediately sent a message to Muʿawiyah, "We will never treat you like you treated us. Come on and take water, this heavenly bounty, which is equally ours and yours." Looking to his army, he said, "Our goals are higher than water."(1)

Miscellaneous and local wars continued until Dhu'l-Hijjah and brought more casualties. Both opponents avoided it, lest it led to the annihilation of the army. The fighting intensified in Dhu'l-Hijjah and the Imam (ʿa) dispatched his commanders, Malik, Hujr, Shabath, Khalid, Ziyad, Saʿid, Maʿqil, and Qays with the battalions which they had under their control to the battlefield. Malik's battalion**Error! Bookmark not defined.** performed better than the others. Occasionally, in one day, two attacks occurred and casualties occurred on both sides. When the sacred month of Muharram arrived, the opponents decided to stop the war and negotiations and dispatch of representatives began.

The Imam (ʿa) dispatched great personalities like Adi, Shabath, Yazid and Ziyad so that perhaps they could convince Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to change his mind. Here are the details of their discussions:

Adi: "We came to invite you to unite our community and protect the spilling of Muslim blood. We want you to obey the most distinguished and most righteous person of Islam. People gathered near him and God guided them and no one refused to make allegiance with him except you and those who are with you. We request you to renounce this rebellion before you meet the fate of the renegades."

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "It seems as though you

(1) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, page 165.

came here to threat and scare instead of reform! It is very far away what you desire. I am the son of Harb and never tremble while crushing the empty water-skins. (Arabs crush their empty water-skins to make the camels run). By God, you are from those who encouraged people to kill Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and you yourself are his murderer. Alas! Adi, I have obtained this with my own powerful hands."

Shabath and Ziyad: "We have come to establish peace and you are bragging about yourself. Renounce this nonsense and speak about things which are useful for you and us."

Yazid: "We have come here to deliver the message and receive your reply. We never renounce listening to the advice, issues and arguments that may result in unity and solidarity. You know our Imam, and Muslims know about his superiority, and this truth is not hidden from you. The righteous and distinguished people never regard you as equal to Ali. Fear God and don't oppose Ali. By God, I don't know any other person more pious and ascetic than to Ali who possesses all distinctions."

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "You have invited me for two things; preservation of unity and obedience of Ali. I accept the second one but never see any obedience to Ali. Your leader has killed our caliph and given refuge to the killers. If he thinks that he has not killed the caliph, I too have no objection to it, but could it be denied that the killers of the caliph are his companions? He should surrender them to us so that we can punish them and then speak to you about obedience and unity."

In his arguments, Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** didn't select a single position; he continuously spoke according to the conditions. Sometimes, he emphasized upon the Imam (ʿa) as a killer and at no price changed his position. Occasionally, in these discussions, immunity of the Imam (ʿa) from the blood of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was accepted but he insisted upon handing over the killers to him for retaliation. The objective in handing over Uthman's killers was nothing except creating confusion among the soldiers of the Imam (ʿa).

He knew that the revolutionaries of Iraq, Egypt and Hijaz were exhausted with the oppression and tyranny of Uthman and after his **Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s killing pulled the Imam (ʿa) to accept their allegiance, and they were the killers of Uthman because of participating or approving or inviting, propagating, or showing contentment and happiness. Surrender of such a huge group, although impossible, would not have produced any other result except disintegration of the ruling system

and raising the possibility of rebellion.

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** insisted that the issue of government should be resolved through the council of Emigrants and Helpers who lived in different provinces. Now, let us present the negotiations of Muʿawiyah with the representatives of the Imam (ʿa).

Shabath: "O Muʿawiyah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** I swear to God, if Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Yasir is handed over to you, will you kill him?"

The Prophet (s) said about Ammar: He will be killed by the transgressing group.

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "By God, if Ali hands over the son of Sumayyah, I will kill him for Na'il, Uthman's slave."

Shabath: "By the God of heaven, you haven't followed the path of justice. By God except Whom there is no god; you will never have access to killing the son of Sumayyah until heads are separated from bodies and the earth with all of its vastness narrows down upon you."

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "If the earth becomes narrow for me, it will become narrower upon you."

Here, the words of the Imam's representatives ended and they decided to return without any result or making the slightest dent in the style and thinking of Muʿawiyah who**Error! Bookmark not defined.** asked Ziyad to speak to him privately and thought that he might influence his thinking, although most of the representatives of these groups consisted of the Imam's companions.

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "Ali has cut off the kinship bonds, killed our leader and given refuge to his killers. I want you to help me through your family and tribe and I commit that after the victory the government of one of these two cities; Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Basra; whichever you prefer, will be yours."

Ziyad: "I, for the sake of God Who has blessed me with graces, will never be the supporter of a criminal."

Having spoken these words whose meanings reflect the content of the words spoken by Prophet Moses, Ziyad left the meeting with Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. Amr was present in that meeting. Muʿawiyah looked at him and said, "When I talk to each one of them, they all reply excellently. Their hearts are like the heart of one

person and the logic of every one of them is similar."

This time, Muʿawiyah dispatched three people to the Imam (ʿa). They were the transmitters of Muʿawiyah's words. Their discussions with the Imam (ʿa) were as follows:

Habib: *"*Uthman***Error! Bookmark not defined.*** *was a guided caliph and you transgressed upon his rights and killed him. If you say that you didn't kill him, renounce the government and assign it to a council so that whoever is elected by the people can takeover the control of ruling affairs."* The logic of Habib was very weak and without any base. First he accused the Imam (ʿa) as being the killer without any witness; then he considered himself as the defender of the caliph's right and accepted the Imam's refusal; then, asked him to renounce the government! It seemed that all his words were a preparation for his last words. Therefore, the Imam (ʿa) firmly said:

You are much less than what you think, to interfere in the issues relevant to the government and desire my dismissal. Be silent, as you neither have that position nor are worthy of it.

Habib: "By God, you will find yourself in condition that you never like to be in."

The Imam: "Who are you? Go and bring your cavalry and infantry, if you can accomplish anything."

Shurahbil: "My words are similar to Habib's. Do you have any other reply except the reply already given to him?"

The Imam (ʿa): "I have another reply to your friend and you. God sent His Prophet and through his means rescued people from deviations and ultimately asked him back towards Him after he had completed his mission. Then, people selected Abu-Bakr as his successor and Abu-Bakr too made Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** his successor. Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** then took over the control of affairs. Because of the acts that he committed, people criticized, attacked and killed him. People came to me while I wasn't a participant in their acts and they insisted that they should make allegiance with me. In the beginning, I didn't accept. They again insisted and said, 'the community isn't ready for any one other than you and we are afraid that if we don't make allegiance with you, divisions will appear.' Due to this reason, I accepted their allegiance. Talhah and al-Zubayr made allegiance with me but broke it later. Then, Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** rose

to oppose me. He neither has precedence in religion nor does any correct deed. His father and he are amongst the Released Ones. He is from the party of Umayyah and he and his father were the persistent enemies of God and His Prophet. Yet, they had to accept Islam only with reluctance. I am astonished that you are providing manpower for him and leaving the family of the Prophet (s), and in spite of the presence of the Prophet's family, you are inclining towards another. I invite you to the Book of God and the traditions of the Prophet (s) and to destroy falsehood and revive the principles of religion. I say that and pray for every man and woman believer."

If Shurahbil wasn't a prisoner of his whims and desires and was aware of the history of Islam, he would have accepted the words of Imam Ali ('a). But feeling incompetent, he changed the topic and said, "What do you say about Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**? Do you testify that he was killed as oppressed?" Such a discussion was only meant to create confusion in the assembly. This issue required investigating the reasons of Uthman's murder. Therefore, Imam Ali ('a) didn't testify and they left the assembly, saying, "Whoever doesn't testify his being oppressed, we are disgusted with him."

The Imam ('a) considered them justified for the following verses of the Holy Quran: *Lo! Thou canst make the dead to hear, nor canst thou make the deaf hear the call when they have turned to flee; nor canst thou lead the blind out of their error. Thou canst make none to hear, save those who believe Our revelations and who have surrendered.* [27:80-1]

FATE OF THE BATTLE OF SIFFINERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

The Imam (ʿa) was a perfect manifestation of patience and steadfastness. He showed all sorts of softness and flexibility to Muʿawiyah, but the charm of power had deceived Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to such an extent that dispatching representatives and advice of advisors didn't benefit him. It only made him a die-hard stubborn. Inevitably, the Imam (ʿa) decided to finish the war and not waste his precious time anymore and remove this cancerous tumor from the Islamic community. The Holy Quran has clearly permitted an Islamic ruler to follow this course in the following verse: *And if, thou fears treachery from any folk then throw back to them (their treaty) fairly. Lo! God loveth not the treacherous*. [8:58]

This Islamic instruction protects justice and, as an ethical principle, doesn't permit attacking the enemy without issuing a warning even if the indication of treachery is clearly manifested through their behavior and words.

The Imam (ʿa), in Siffin, even stepped farther than this. There didn't exist any no-war treaty between him and Muʿawiyah, and it was only regard for the sacred months that caused postponement for a few more days. Nevertheless, he ordered Marthad to position himself in front of the Syrian army on the last day of Muharram at the time of sunset and, with a loud and eloquent voice, announce, "O people of Syria, the Commander of the Faithful has said: I have given you respite and remained reluctant to start the war so that you might return to the truth. I presented the proof to you from the Book of God and invited you to it, but you neither ended the mutiny nor accepted the truth. Under these circumstances, I hereby declare any sort of pardon as null and void because God doesn't like the treacherous."(1)

Imam Ali's message was the last warning to Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s army. Then, the Imam lined up his army as follows: Ammar ibn Yasir was appointed the commander-in-chief of the cavalry, Abdullah ibn Budayl **Error! Bookmark not defined.**the commander-in-

(1) *Tarikh al-Tabri* 3/5; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh* 3/149; Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, pages 202-3; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* 4/25; al-Masʿudi, *Muruj al-Dhahab* 2/378 (in short and with minor variation).

chief of the infantry, and Hashim ibn Utbah the standard-bearer. The soldiers of Yemen were positioned on the right wing, the soldiers of the Rabiʿah tribe on the left, and the soldiers of the Mudhar tribe, who were mostly from Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Basra, in the center; and each of these three divisions were subdivided into cavalry and infantry troops. Al-Ashʿath ibn Qays led the cavalry troops of the right wing and Abdullah ibn Abbas led the left wing. The infantry troops of the two sides were led by Sulayman ibn Surad and al-Harith ibn Murrah. The Imam then distributed the standards of the tribes amongst their elders and renowned personalities. According to Nasr ibn Muzahim, twenty six standards were raised by twenty six soldiers of the different tribes.

Error! Bookmark not defined. The next morning, the Imam (ʿa) stood among his soldiers and instructed, "Don't start fighting before they do so that you will fight back. When you defeat them, do not kill the absconders and wounded, do not expose the screens, and do not do anything to the dead bodies. When you enter in their storage and garrison, do not engage in slandering and do not enter houses before obtaining the permission of their people. Do not take any belongings of the enemies except what you get hold of in the battlefield. Do not incite women by hurting them even though they speak bad words about you, because they are weak physically and mentally..."

In all battles, Imam Ali (a) instructed his soldiers, saying, "O servants of God! Avoid any act of disobedience to God, keep your eyes lowered, lower you voices, and speak little. Prepare yourselves for combat and defend with teeth and claws. Be steadfast and persistent and remember God to remain righteous. Avoid division and being split into groups because this may decrease you magnificence and grandeur. Be steadfast, for God is with those who are steadfast."

The lines of the Imam's army were organized in such a manner that a portion of some of the tribes living in Iraq and another portion living in Syria were positioned against each other. Initially, the combat rolled slowly and they ceased fighting, tolerant and hopeful on both sides. The military columns engaged in combat until noon and after that retreated. Later on, the war intensified and continued from morning to evening and even prolonged into some part of the nights.

On the first of Safar, Malik al-Ashtar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** from the Imam's army and Habib ibn Maslamah form the Syrian army with the individuals under their commands combated causing casualties. They

then stopped and returned to their garrisons. On the second day, Hashim ibn Utbah, commanding a group of cavalry and infantry troops and Abu'l-Aʿwar from the Syrian army stepped onto the battlefield and started combating.

On the third day, Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Yasir from the Imam's army and Amr ibn al-Aas from Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s army faced each other and the most intense fighting took place between them. Ammar with a loud cry said to the Syrian army, "Do you want to know the true enemy of God and His Prophet (s) who started oppression against Muslims and helped polytheists? At the moment, when God manifested His religion through His Prophet, he accepted Islam outwardly because of fear without any liking or inclination. When the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** passed away, he became an enemy of Muslims and befriended their enemies. O People! That person is Muʿawiyah. Curse him and rise to fight against him. He is the one who wants to silence God's illumination and help the enemies of God."(1)

A man said to Ammar,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** "The Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** said: Fight with people until they accept Islam and when they do, their blood and wealth are immune." Ammar testified to his words and added, "The party of the Umayyad didn't accept Islam from its prime days; rather, they pretended to accept it until they found helpers and supporters for their own disbelief."

Having said these words, Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ordered the commander of the cavalry to attack the enemy who resisted. Then, he ordered the commander of the infantry troops to attack and they could scatter the lines of the enemy, forcing Amr to change his place. Employing the same strategy of Ammar who accused the Umayyad party of heresy and succeeded to create chaos and confusion among the enemy troops, reciprocated by tying a black piece upon his spear and raising it. It was the same banner that one day the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** had given in his hand. Everyone was astonished and the tongues started talking about it. The Imam (ʿa) spoke immediately to prevent any sort of sedition and to enlighten his companions, "Do you know the story of this banner? The Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** brought it out on a day and said to the Muslim fighters, 'Who can take it in addition to whatever he has in his hands?' Amr asked, 'What does it contain?' and the Holy Prophet (s) replied, 'This is not to

(1) *Ibid*.

fight with Muslims and not to go near the pagans.' Amr with this condition took it but by God he came near the polytheists and today he is fighting against Muslims. By God Who split the seed and created human beings, these people never accepted Islam with the sincerity of their heart; rather, they kept hidden their unbelief and returned to their enmity when they found companions helping their unbelief except that they apparently didn't stop praying."[1]

On the fourth day, Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah stepped into the battlefield with a column and Ubaydullah ibn Umar,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** with a regiment from the Syrian army, came for confrontation. The fire of war was ignited and an intense fight took place between them. Ubaydullah sent a message to Muhammad to engage in a hand to hand fight with each other. Muhammad moved to engage with him hand to hand. The Imam (ʿa) learned about this incident and immediately ran his horse towards his son and ordered him to stop and said to Ubaydullah, "I will fight with you, come on." Hearing these words, Ubaydullah's body trembled and he said, "I don't need to fight with you." Then he turned his horse back and retreated from the battlefield. Then, the soldiers of the opponents returned to their garrisons.

On Sunday, the fifth Safar, 38 A.H., two military columns engaged in combat; one led by Ibn Abbas and the other by Uqbah, and after intense fighting, they returned to their centers. At that moment, the Syrian commander said swearwords about the children of Abd al-Muttalib. Ibn Abbas called him for combat but he refused. The Syrian army was completely blind, deaf and ignorant about the incidents and history of Islam; otherwise, those individuals wouldn't have been assigned as their commander who the Holy Quran had called lewd and wicked. Al-Walid was the person about whom the Holy Quran has said: *O ye who Believe! If an evil-doer brings you tidings, verify it.* [49:6][2]

Is he who is a believer like unto him who is an evil-doer? They are not alike. [32:18]

Although groups were killed in these combats and both opponents returned to their garrisons without any result, the speeches of the Imam (ʿa),

(1) *Tarikh al-Tabri* 3/7; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh* 3/149; Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, pages 215-6; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* 4/31.

(2) *Tarikh al-Tabri* 3/7; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh* 3/150; Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, pages 221-2; al-Masʿudi, *Muruj al-Dhahab* 2/388.

Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Ibn Abbas enlightened the horizon for the Syrians and Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s baseless stand became explicitly clear. On the fifth day of combat, Shimr ibn Abrahah, with a group of reciters of the Quran, joined the Imam's army. Their escape was a clear indication of the darkness that engulfed the Syrian army. The sinning ruler of Syria trembled for himself at the thought of such an act being repeated. So, Amr said to him, "You want to fight with the man who has a close relationship with Muhammad and Islam, and his feet are steadfast and he is truthful. In understanding the codes of war, distinctions and spirituality, he is without any match. He, with the companions of Muhammad countable upon fingers, with heroes and reciters and the most righteous people, has come to fight you and for them the influence of Islam possesses grandeur and exaltedness. It is therefore necessary to put the Syrians under harsh pressure before the prolongation of war makes them feel guilty and corrupted through bribery. Whatever you want to forget, forget; but don't ever forget that you are upon falsehood."

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** learned from the old politician that pretending to be religious, faithful and pious without anything inside the heart can mobilize the Syrian army. He ordered a pulpit to be arranged and called the heads of the army. He mounted upon the pulpit and like a person filled with sorrow for the sake of religion and faith shed tears and said, "O people, lend your lives and heads to me. Don't be slow and don't pull your hands from helping me. Today is the day full of danger; it is the day for protecting the truth. You are upon truth and your hands are argument and proof. You are fighting with one who has broken the allegiance and spilled the forbidden blood and in the heavens no one considers him as pardoned."

Then, Amr went upon the pulpit and said similar words**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

Information reached the Imam (ʿa) that Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was inciting the Syrians to fight through deceit, trickery and pretence of religion. Therefore, he ordered the army to gather upon a point. The narrator says that I saw the Imam (ʿa) resting on his bow and surrounded by the companions of the Prophet (s) so that people know that the companions of the Prophet (s) are with him. Then he praised God and said, "O people, listen to my words and save them in your memories. Self-centeredness causes stubbornness, arrogance, and pride, and Satan is the present enemy who deceives you with false promises. Know that Muslims

are brothers of one another. Don't say bad things and restrain your hands from helping him. The code of religion is one and its paths are leveled. Whoever takes it, has joined it; whoever leaves it, has separated himself from it; and whoever separates himself from it, is doomed. The one who is trusted and commits treachery or promises and doesn't deliver is not a Muslim. We are the family of divine blessing. Our words are true and our character is superior. The Last of the Messengers is from us; to us belongs the leadership of Islam; and we are the reciters of the Quran. I invite you to God Almighty and to the Prophet (s) and I command you to fight the enemy and to be steadfastness in His path, seeking His pleasure, performing the prayer, paying charity, performing pilgrimage to the House of God, fasting in Ramadan and giving alms to those who deserve it. It is astonishing for the world that Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Amr suddenly decide to motivate the people to the religion! You know that I never opposed the Prophet (s), and in situations when the heroes pulled back because fear and trembling overtook them, I placed my soul as his shield. Thank God that He distinguished me with this privilege. The Prophet of God (s) gave his soul while his head was upon my bosom, and single-handedly I washed his dead body while the Archangels turned his body from this to that side. By God, none of the nations after the death of their prophet became divided except when the followers of falsehood dominates the followers of truth."[1]

When the words of the Imam (ʿa) reached at this point, Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** the faithful and loyal companion said to people, "The Imam (ʿa) has informed you that Muʿawiyah's community, neither in the beginning nor at the end, selected the correct path."

The Imam (ʿa) spoke in the afternoon of Monday, the sixth of Safar, and, at the end, requested an all-out attack of his army to uproot the roots of corruption. For this, he delivered a sermon in which he explained the reason for the war.

(1) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, pages 222-3; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.** 5/181-182.

FINAL ATTACK

Since the beginning of the bloody Battle of Siffin**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, eight complete days had passed and periodic attacks and movement of military columns hadn't produced any result. The Imam (ʿa) wished to accomplish the goal with the least casualties, but was absolutely sure that limited military attacks wouldn't produce any result except losses. So, in the radiance of the moon of the night of Wednesday the 8th of Safar, he delivered the following sermon to his friends: "Thank God that whatever He defeats will never rise and whatever He makes permanent will never be destroyed. If He so desires, even two individuals of this community or from another creation will never have differed; human beings will not have disputed in affairs relevant to them; and, people who had benefited from learning wouldn't have denied the distinctions of learned individuals. Fate and destiny pulled us and this group to this point opposite to each other. All of us are in the presence of God. If He so desired, He could have sent down punishment so that the oppressor would have been destroyed and the truth would have become manifest. He has made the world the house of character and the Hereafter the house of rewards so that the evil ones will be punished for their bad character and the righteous will be awarded for their good character. Know that tomorrow, God willing, we are going to encounter the enemy. Thus, offer more prayer tonight, recite more Quranic verses, ask God for steadfastness and victory and tomorrow encounter them with seriousness and precaution and be truthful in your tasks."

Thus, all the soldiers of the Imam (ʿa) went to their swords, spears and arrows and busied themselves sharpening them.

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** organized his army and divided them into various groups. The people different regions of Levant constituted different sides of his army, and the people of Syria, under the command of al-Dhahhak assumed the responsibility of protecting Muʿawiyah and surrounded him in order to protect him from the attacks.

The army was organized in a manner that wasn't liked by Amr who reminded Muʿawiyah of the contract that they had signed and said: "Let me have the command of the people of Homs and dismiss Abu'l-Aʿwar." Muʿawiyah was happy with his proposal and immediately sent this message: "Amr has precedence and experience in military affairs that I and you don't possess. I have appointed him as the commander of the cavalry

and you should move yourself to some other point."

Amr called his two sons Abdullah and Muhammad and on the basis of his experience organized the army and ordered the armored unit to be in the front and those without an armor to take positions at the back. Then he ordered his two sons to walk among the lines and check the organization in detail and accuracy. He wasn't satisfied with that; so, he himself walked among the army and checked their order and, like Muʿawiyah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** positioned himself upon the pulpit in the center of the army whose security was assigned upon the Yemenis and ordered that whoever attempted to come close to the pulpit should be killed immediately.

Whenever the motivation behind the fighting is to seek power to rule one assigns a group for his security, but if the aim is spiritual, getting killed in the path doesn't matter. Nobody was assigned for the Imam's security; rather, he himself was mounted upon a dark colored horse, ordering and leading his army, and sometimes with his shout of *allahu-akbar* shivered down the spines of Syrian heroes or kept them away from his cutting sword. The different manner of leadership expresses the different intentions. Seeking martyrdom comes from firm belief in the Hereafter and faith in the truth, while fear of death and sacrificing others to protect your own soul comes from love for worldly pleasures and denial of the other side. It is astonishing that Amr admitted this reality and said about the Imam's army, "This group has come with a heavenly goal and doesn't have any hesitation in being martyred."

Advising Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** wasn't due to love for him; rather, he cared for his own interest. He desired his victory for himself and repeatedly reminded Muʿawiyah of the value of his precious services. The following discussion between them is a reflection of this reality:

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "Organize the lines of the army as soon as possible."

Amr: "Subject to the condition that there should be government for me."

Muʿawiyah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** fearing that after Imam Ali (ʿa),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** Amr could become his rival, asked: "Which government?"

Amr, an old player of politics and a merchant without piety, placed a cover of piety upon his face and said: "Could Egypt be a replacement of Paradise?

Does killing of Ali have an appropriate price comparable to Hell's punishment that never calms down?"

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, fearing that Amr's words might circulate among his army, replied: "Calm down, calm down, no one should listen to your words."

Amr looked at the people of Syria only because of the government of Egypt and said: "O soldiers of Syria! Organize your lines and give your heads to your God as a loan. Seek help from God and fight with your and your God's enemy. Go ahead and kill them and may God kill as well as destroy them."

Imam Ali (ʿa) asked for the dark colored horse because of the power it possessed. It was continuously moving and was controlled by pulling its bridle. The Imam (ʿa) took its bridle in his hand and recited the following Quranic verse: *Glorified be He who hath subdued these unto us and we weren't capable (of subduing them).* [43:13]

Then, he raised his hands for prayer and said, "O God! Steps are taken towards You; bodies suffer pain, hearts pay attention, hands are raised and eyes become open. O God, I complain to You about the absence of our Prophet (s), increase of our enemies, and scattering of our desires. O God! Judge between us and this nation with truth, and You are the best of Judges."

The final attack began and continued from early morning until late at night and the opponents returned to their garrisons without achieving victory. On Thursday, the Imam (ʿa) offered the Dawn Prayer in the darkness, started the attack, and engaged his companions from each side. A part of the prayer of the Imam (ʿa) was: "O God! If you make us victorious upon our enemy, prevent us from oppressing and make our steps steadfast on truth. And if they become victorious upon us, bless us with martyrdom and protect our remaining companions from sedition."

The speeches of heads and elder personalities of each army played an outstanding role in propagation. Very often, a fiery sermon lifts an army from its place and prepares it for victory. Therefore, on Thursday, the 9th of Safar, the second day of attack, the elder personalities in the Imam's army delivered speeches. Besides, the Imam's companions like Abdullah ibn Budayl, Saʿid ibn Qays, and Malik al-Ashtar delivered speeches and every one of them, giving a special reason, encouraged the Imam's army to attack the Syrian enemy. Meanwhile, some incidents occurred that need to be mentioned.

Hujr ibn Adi al-Kindi had met the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and accepted Islam and later on was considered among Imam Ali's group of sincere defenders. He ultimately sacrificed his life on this path at the hands of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s executioner, accompanied by the sincere followers of the Imam (ʿa) at Marj-Adhra (located approximately twenty kilometers from Damascus). He is remembered as the virtuous Hujr while his uncle Hujr ibn Yazid was named as the wicked Hujr.

Incidentally, on this day, these two persons, in spite of having bonds of kinship, confronted each other. The invitation to fight came from the uncle and, while both of them were busy in combat, a man form the army of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** rushed towards the help of the uncle and struck his spear upon the nephew. At this moment, a group of Hujr's companions attacked the man killed him, but the uncle fled the battlefield.

Abdullah ibn Budayl, a superior commander in the Imam's army, was among the most eminent companions of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and, after Malik al-Ashtar, was famous for self-purification, bravery, and epic fighting**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. He was the commander of the right wing and the command of the left wing was under the control of Abdullah ibn Abbas. The reciters of the Quran had gathered around Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Yasir, Qays ibn Saʿid and Abdullah ibn Budyal who looked to his companions after the beginning of the attack and said, "The position that is claimed by Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** doesn't belong to him; he is confronting the real holders of the position and with falsehood has come to fight with the truth and, with Arab nomads and various tribes, has attacked and made deviation attractive before their eyes. You, by God, are under the illumination of God and an illuminated proof. Fight with these tyrants and rascals and don't be afraid of them. In your hand is the Book from God which is clear and accepted. You had already fought them under the banner of the Prophet (s) and, by God, at present they aren't more pious and more righteous as compared to that time."(1)

While he was holding the command of the right wing of the army, he had put on two armors, picked up two swords and began the attack. In his first

(1) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, page 234; *Tarikh al-Tabri* 3/9; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.** 3/151 (with some minor variation).

attack, he **Error! Bookmark not defined.**defeated the army of Habib ibn Maslamah, the commander of the left wing of Muʿawiyah's army. His goal was to reach the tent of Muʿawiyah and kill him, but Muʿawiyah's guards had signed the contract of death with him in the forms of five lines or, in other words, like five walls, encircling him, obstructed his advancement. These walls didn't create any problem and fell one after the other. Even though the attack of Abdullah was marvelous, before he reached the pavilion of Muʿawiyah he was killed. Al-Tabari described this incident more clearly than Nasr ibn Muzahim. He wrote: "Abdullah was busy in combat on the left wing of the army of the enemy and Malik attacked the left wing. Malik, completely armored, held a steel shield in his hand. When he turned it downwards, it seemed that water was pouring from it; and when he raised it up, its rays blinded the eyes. He destroyed the left wing completely. In his attack, he reached the same point where Abdullah ibn Budayl, accompanied by no more than three hundreds reciters,(1) had already arrived. He found the companions like dead bodies glued to the ground. Malik removed the enemies from their surroundings and they felt revived and immediately asked about the Imam (ʿa). Hearing that he was safe and fighting at the left wing of his army, all of them thanked God.

Abdullah, accompanied by a few people, insisted on going ahead and after killing Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s guards had access to him. Yet, Malik sent him the message not to move ahead and stay on the point where he was and defend himself.(2) He imagined that with an electrifying attack he could destroy the lines of guards and thus had access to Muʿawiyah. Holding swords in both hands, he started the attack and whoever encountered him was killed with one stroke. He went so far ahead that Muʿawiyah was forced to change his position.(3)

One astonishing thing that Abdullah did was that while fighting with the guards he cried the slogan, "O seekers of Uthman's blood" and he meant his own brother Uthman who was killed in the same war, but the enemy interpreted it the otherwise and were surprised why he was inviting people to seek the blood of Uthman! Ultimately the task reached the point where Muʿawiyah seriously feared for his life and repeatedly sent messages to the

(1) Nasr ibn Muzahim, in *Waqʿat Siffin,* wrote their number as one hundred.

(2) Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh* 3/153.

(3) *Ibid.;* Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.** 3/196.

commander of his right wing army Muhammad ibn Maslamah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to come to his rescue. Habib's efforts reached nowhere and he couldn't prevent Abdullah from pursuing his goal. He wasn't too far from Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s pavilion. Muʿawiyah didn't have any alternative except to order his guards to throw stones at. This tactic produced results and the guards pelted stones towards Abdullah who had very few individuals around him. They were able to stop Abdullah who ultimately fell down fatally wounded.(1)

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was able to save his life; so, he exploded with joy and appeared upon his dead body. A man named Abdullah ibn Amir, who was close to Muʿawiyah, threw his own turban upon Abdullah's face and invoked God's blessings upon him. Muʿawiyah insisted on seeing his face but he showed reluctance because he was his friend in the past. Muʿawiyah promising that he wouldn't mutilate his body saw his face and said, "By God, he is the elder of this community. O God, make me victorious against two other heroes; Malik and al-Ashʿath."(2) He then murmured Hatam ibn Adi's poetic verses in praise of Abdullah's heroism and matchless bravery:

If war shows its teeth to a warrior, he should reciprocate

And if it rolls its sleeves up, he should do the same.

The fiercest fight between the followers of the Imam (ʿa) and the supporters of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** started at the beginning of Safar, 38 A.H. and continued until the fifteenth night of the month, which narrators introduced as *laylat al-harir****Error! Bookmark not defined.***. In Arabic, the word *harir* means the yelping of the dog, because that night the army of Muʿawiyah yelped like a dog under the strokes of the Imam's army. It was very close that the foundations of the Umayyads would have been uprooted forever, but suddenly Amr, through deceit and trickery, was able to create division among the soldiers of the Imam (ʿa) and stop the bloody and fateful battle. Ultimately, on Friday, the 18th of Safar, the war was ceased for arbitration. Narrators described the events of the Battle of Siffin until the tenth day in an orderly manner, but after that it became unsystematic. Researchers, with their own sense of history, arrange incidents on the basis of their own findings.

(1) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, pages 245-6.

(2) *Ibid.*; *Tarikh al-Tabari* 3/13-6; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh* 3/153-4; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.** 5/197; al-Masʿudi, *Muruj al-Dhahab* 2/398.

Events of the tenth day

On the tenth day, the sun shed its light to illuminate the plain of Siffin that had been turned into a whirlpool of blood. The lovers of martyrdom and adorers of the Imam (ʿa) circled him as the pupil of their eye. One of their commanders stood up and said, "Who is ready to give his hand to make allegiance with death and sell his soul for God?" At this moment, seven thousand people rose and in the same manner made allegiance with their commander and asked to move ahead to reach the pavilion of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and not look back. In their adoration, it is sufficient to say that one of them stood up and said, "Never in the sight of an Arab will you be excused if one of you remains alive and Ali (ʿa) suffers injury."

When Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** witnessed the enthusiasm and epic-making adoration of the soldiers of the Rabiʿah tribe, he uncontrollably recited verses in their praise:

If it is said that the Rabiʿah tribe turned its back from the field

Suddenly a solid group, like a mountain, shows up to fight

In comparison to the steadfastness shown by the soldiers of the Rabiʿah tribe, the soldiers of the Mudhar tribe didn't show any loyalty on their side because of the killing of Abdullah ibn Budayl, their commander, and their flight from the battlefield, the right wing of the Imam's army, was defeated. The soldiers of that front joined the center of the army that was under the command of the Imam (ʿa). In order to change the situation of the right wing, the Imam (ʿa) appointed Sahl ibn Hunayf as the commander, but the stormy attack of the Syrian army under the command of Habib ibn Maslamah didn't give an opportunity to the newly appointed commander of the right wing an opportunity to reorganize his forces. When the Imam (ʿa) learned about the weakness of the Mudhar tribe, he immediately called Malik and ordered him to ask this group who had given up their Islamic discipline, "Why are you fleeing from death against which you don't have the strength to fight, towards an uncertain life?"

Malik stood up in front of the right wing defeated army and after delivering the Imam's message, said, "Fleeing from the battlefield results in losing your pride, facing wretchedness in life and death, shame in this world and the Hereafter, and God's wrath and painful punishment. Press your teeth tightly and, with your heads, rush to welcome the enemy." Having said these words, he organized the right wing and started to attack and pushed back the left wing of Muʿawiyah's**Error! Bookmark not defined.** army

that was combating against the right wing of the Imam's army to the extent that he reached to the center of Muʿawiyah's army. Reorganization of the right wing after defeat made the Imam (ʿa) happy, who said, "Be steadfast and patient, for tranquility and calm come upon you from God and make yourselves stronger with certainty because the defeated persons have exposed themselves to God's punishment. Fleeing from battlefields combines God's punishment with wretchedness."

Ma'rib is a city located in the north-east of Sana'a and possesses a prestige and is famous because of a great dam that was destroyed between 542-570 A.D. The destruction of the dam caused by the famous storm resulted in their migration to various parts of the Arabian Peninsula and a great majority of them settled in Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Iraq. In spite of their migrating to various regions, they were able to maintain their tribal associations and bonds. It was due to this reason that branches of the tribes of Azd, Mudhar, Kindah, Quzaʿah and Rabiʿah lived in Iraq while the other separated branches lived in Syria.

According to the Imam's plan of organizing his army, the individuals of each tribe from Iraq should take position exactly in front of those of the same tribe who lives in Syria so that this confrontation might lead to reducing the intense bloodshed. One day, the chief of the Khathʿam Syrian tribe requested meeting his counterpart from Iraq and after a little while the meeting was arranged. The Syrian man requested that both branches of the tribe should stop fighting and sit in waiting, and whoever among the opponents becomes victorious should obey him. Yet, the discussion of these two chiefs didn't produce any fruitful outcome because the Iraqi chief wasn't ready to take his hand away from the Imam (ʿa) under any condition.

A hand to hand fighting between these two persons of the same tribe started. The Iraqi chief defeated his counterpart from Syria and reciprocally a Syrian man attacked the Iraqi chief and killed Abu-Kaʿb, but, without any delay, immediately after killing, started crying upon the killed, and said, "I killed you because of obedience to Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, while you had a close relationship with me and I liked you more than him. By God, I don't know what to say except that Satan has misguided me and the people of Quraysh have made us a tool in their hands." This hand to hand fighting between the two branches of one tribe after killing eighty people finally ended.

History repeats itself

Some interesting scenes from the Battle of Siffin**Error! Bookmark not defined.** are described here:

1. Naʿim ibn Suhayb from the Iraqi branch of the Bujal tribe was killed and his cousin who was with the Syrian army insisted on Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to allow him to bury his cousin's dead body but Muʿawiyah didn't permit him and said that because of this group, the dead body of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was buried at night. The Syrian soldier threatened, "If you do not allow me, I will quit you and join Ali." Ultimately, Muʿawiyah allowed him to bury the dead body of his cousin.

2. Two branches of the same tribe confronted each other and the chief of one branch expressed, "It is a great calamity that two branches of the same tribe combat with each other and, by God, with this war we are not doing any thing except cutting our own hands and feet. If we don't do this act, we will not help the chief of our tribe and if we do it, we waste our own prestige and silence the fire of our lives."

3. A Syrian combatant marched to the battlefield and asked for opponents. An Iraqi combatant challenged him and strokes were exchanged between them. Ultimately, the Iraqi brought the Syrian to the ground and sat upon his chest. When he removed the veil and helmet from the face of the Syrian, he saw that he was his step-brother! He requested his companions to ask the Imam (ʿa) to clarify his duty. The Imam (ʿa) ordered that he should let him go and he did so. Nevertheless, that man again joined Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s army.

4. Another Syrian soldier marched to the battlefield and challenged the Imam's army. A combatant from the Imam's army accepted the challenge and came to the battlefield. When they came close to each other, they recognized each other and both invited the other to his leader. The Iraqi man described the degree of his faith with respect to the Imam (ʿa) to his cousin and said, "By God except Whom there is no other god, I can strike upon this white tent (Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s tent) with this sword that nothing will remain left of its owner."

It is ironic Shimr ibn Dhi'l-Jawshan, the slayer of Imam al-Husayn, participated in the Battle of Siffin**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and supported Imam Ali (ʿa) against his opponents. A Syrian soldier struck him with his sword and broke his forehead bone. He, in order to take revenge, hit his Syrian counterpart with his sword but failed to kill him. Shimr

returned to this tent to regain his energy, drank water, took a spear in his hand and returned to the battlefield and saw that the Syrian was still standing at the same place. He didn't give any time to that Syrian and struck him with his spear, causing him to fall down from his horse. If other Syrians hadn't rushed to his rescue, he would have killed him. Shimr expressed, "This is for that."

Culture of taking pride in martyrdom

Taking pride in martyrdom, love for meeting God, and certainty about the abode of the Hereafter while fighting are cultural features that do not exist among other nations. Love for martyrdom is the greatest motivating factor to rise and fight. A martyr with this belief replaces the insignificant transient life of a few days for eternal life and doesn't see anything except God. During the Battle of Siffin,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** a powerful hero from the Syrian army marched to the battlefield and the Iraqi soldiers refrained from facing him, except for an old man who suddenly appeared and accepted the challenge, but the Imam (ʿa) intervened and prevented him from facing the enemy repeatedly until the old man insisted, "Permit me to participate in this fighting so that either I get killed and rush towards Paradise or kill him to remove his evil from your head." This time, the Imam (ʿa) permitted him and prayed in his favor.

The old man's bravery created such an intense fear and intimidated the heart of that Syrian hero that he could not find any alternative except to flee to Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s pavilion but that old man pursued him to a point and, since he couldn't get hold of him, returned to his own place. After the martyrdom of Imam Ali (ʿa),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** Muʿawiyah summoned that old man:

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "Brother, if you wouldn't have entered in my presence in this condition, I would have never left you."

The old man: "I adjure you by God to kill and rescue me from this wretched life and make me close to God's countenance."

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "I would never kill you, I need you."

The old man: "What do you need?"

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "I desire to be your brother."

The old man: "In the past, I separated myself from you for the sake of God

and remained in the same condition until God gathers us on the Day of Judgment and judges between you and me."

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "Give me your daughter in marriage."

The old man: "I rejected your earlier request, what to say about this one?"

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "Accept my relationship with you."

The old man: "I don't have any need for your relationship."

A military tactic

On the tenth day or after intense fighting had taken place between the Iraqi and Syrian cavalries, one thousand of the Imam's soldiers were surrounded by the Syrian army and their link with the main axis of their army was severed completely. At this moment, he shouted, "Is there any one who can buy God's pleasure by selling his world for the Hereafter?" A man named Abd al-Aziz mounted upon a dark horse and completely clad in armor with only his eyes visible came to the Imam (ʿa) and said, "Give me a command and I will carry it out." The Imam (ʿa) prayed for him and said, "Attack the Syrian army and release your surrounded companions; and when you reach close to them, tell them that the Commander of the Faithful sends you salutations and wants you to raise the cry of *allahu-akbar* from that side and we will raise the same cry from this side in order to break the circle of siege."

The Imam's soldier bravely attacked the Syrian army, reached near his surrounded companions and delivered the Imam's message. Having heard the Imam's message, they became happy and the fighting and crying of slogans started from both sides. As a result, the siege was broken and the surrounded soldiers were able to join the center of the Imam's army. The Syrians after getting eight hundred killed retreated and the fire of war was silenced temporarily.

Political maneuvers during fierce fighting

Since the beginning of the all-out attack, military experts considered the victory of the Imam (ʿa) as certain, because they witnessed with their own eyes that the situation of war every day turned in his favor and threatened Muʿawiyah's army with death and annihilation. This victory was due to certain factors as follows:

1. Imam Ali's guidelines made the Syrian army suffer double the number of casualties as compared to the Imam's army**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

2. The world had not seen the likes of the unique epic bravery of the Imam (ʿa). According to one of his enemies, the Imam (ʿa) doesn't confront any hero without saturating the ground with his blood. It was under the umbrella of this epic and courageous warrior that the bravest warriors of the enemies were removed and intense fear gripped their souls, making them flee for their life.

3. Due to Imam Ali's incomparable faith, righteousness, piety, and leadership made, his troops were sure-footed and firmly determined to root out falsehood. Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s army was completely different. Perhaps one group was following the footsteps of Muʿawiyah for the vengeance of the blood of Uthman, but most of the uncountable groups circled around him for material causes and worldly wealth. Some others joined him because of their enmity towards the Imam (ʿa) and this reality isn't hidden from any historian.

4. Presence of the famous and beloved persons of the Islamic community in the Imam's army, like Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Yasir, Abu-Ayyub, Qays ibn Saʿd, Hujr ibn Adi, Abdullah ibn Budayl, and many others created doubt and confusion among many of the socially contented but simple-minded soldiers in the army of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

These factors made Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Amr see their defeat as certain; and to prevent it, they secretly wrote letters to the chiefs of Imam Ali's army to win them over and create divisions inside the army.

The most loyal tribe to Imam Ali (ʿa) in the Battle of Siffin was the Rabiʿah. Some unsteadiness was observed from the Mudhar tribe after their commander was killed, but the Rabiʿah was like a mountain steadfast on its position. When the Imam's eyes caught their banners, he asked whom they belonged to and they replied, "They belong to the Rabiʿah tribe." He said, "These are the banners of God. May God protect their owners, bestow upon them steadfastness and strengthen their determination!"

It was reported to the Imam (ʿa) that one of the chiefs of this tribe named Khalid ibn Muʿammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** had some mysterious connections with Muʿawiyah and letters had been exchanged

between them. The Imam (ʿa) immediately called him and the elders of his tribe and said, "O Rabiʿah! You are my companions and heralds of responders to my call. I have been reported that one of your companions has written communications with Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**." Then looking to Khalid, he said, "If what has been reported to me about you is right, I will excuse and pardon you on condition that you leave for Iraq, Hijaz, or anywhere which isn't a part of Muʿawiyah's domain of power and live over there. But if what has been reported about you is a lie, calm our restless hearts with your oaths of assurance." He swore that it wasn't true. His companions said that if it was proved true, they would kill him, and a man said to the Imam (ʿa), "Ask Khalid to take an oath of assurance so that he shouldn't commit any treason against you."

Indicators point that he was the part of the fifth column in the Imam's army and at the moment of victory and even at sensitive moments when it was possible to catch Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and arrest him inside his tent, he ordered retreat and then tried to justify his action.

The Rabiʿah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** tribe constituted the left wing of the Imam's army and the commander was Abdullah ibn Abbas. The left wing was positioned in front of the right wing of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s army that was under the command of the most influential Syrian personality, Dhu'l-Kalaʿ al-Himyari, as well as Ubaydullah Ibn Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. They, with infantry and cavalry forces, made a severe attack upon the Imam's left wing but could not make any progress. In the second attack, Ubaydullah stood ahead of his army and said, "This tribe has killed Uthman;**Error! Bookmark not defined.** if you defeat them, you will have taken your revenge and destroyed Ali." In this attack too, the Rabiʿah tribe with extraordinary steadfastness fought them and except a few feeble ones, none turned back on his feet.

The observers in the Imam's army pointed out that when Khalid saw some of the soldiers retreat, he retreated with them and in this manner wanted to encourage the soldiers with firm steps to retreat but when he saw their solid steadfastness and resistance, he immediately returned to them and tried to justify his act, saying, "My retreat was aimed at bringing back the fleeing soldiers to join you."

Ibn Abi'l-Hadid**Error! Bookmark not defined.** wrote, "Islamic historians are of the opinion that in the second attack, he had certainly

given the order to retreat so that the Imam's army could be defeated on the left wing front, because Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** had promised that if he won, the government of Khorasan would be given to him."[1]

Ibn Muzahim wrote, "Muʿawiyah had sent a message that if in this fighting he became victorious, the position for the governor of Khorasan would be given to him. Khalid was deceived by Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** but he didn't accomplish his desire because when Muʿawiyah took control over the ruling affairs, he dispatched him as the governor of Khorasan but he died midway on his journey before reaching the place of his assignment."

The Syrian army took pride in the presence of Ubaydullah Ibn Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and said, "He is our righteous and son of righteous." Similarly, Iraqis took pride in the presence of Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and called him righteous and son of the righteous. Ultimately, intense fighting between the tribes of Himyar from the Syrian army and Rabiʿah from the Imam's army terminated with the killing of five hundred people from the Imam's army fully armored with only their eyes exposed. After the fierce fighting between these two battalions, a single person did not return to their garrisons as all of them were killed. It was in the same fighting that Dhu'l-Kalaʿ, the greatest supporter of Muʿawiyah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was killed by a person named Khandaf, and fear overcame the soldiers of the Himyar tribe.

2. In the most sensitive moments of the battle, with Satanic intentions to create division, Ubaydullah ibn Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** dispatched one to Imam al-Hasan (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** requesting a meeting with him. Imam al-Hasan (ʿa) after taking permission met him. During the discussions, Ubaydullah said, "Your father spilled the blood of people of Quraysh in the past and in the present. Are you ready to be his successor and be introduced as the caliph?" The Imam (ʿa) harshly turned down his proposal and then informed about his misfortune, saying, "I see that you will sooner or later be killed and I am sure that Satan has made evildoings look attractive in your eyes." On the same day or the next, with a regiment of four thousand, all dressed in green, he was killed by Hani ibn al-Khattab from the Hamdan tribe.

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(1)Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.** 5/228.

3. Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** called his brother Utbah who spoke eloquently and asked him to meet al-Ashʿath ibn Qays and invite him over. He came near the Imam's army and with a loud voice called at al-Ashʿath who was informed that a person from Muʿawiyah's army wished to see him. He ask for his name and when he learnt that it was Utbah, he said, "Since he is a pleasure-seeking youth, I must see him." At the meeting Utbah said, "If it was decided that Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** should meet any one other than Ali, he would meet you because you are the leader of the people of Iraq and Yemen, and the son-in-law and governor of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. You shouldn't compare yourself with the other commanders of Ali, because al-Ashtar killed Uthman, Adi ibn Hatam motivated people to kill him, Saʿid ibn Qays, and Shurayh do not understand any thing accept whimsical desires. Because of your loyalty, you have helped the Iraqis and, due to prejudice, have fought against the Syrians. By God, do you know to what extent our and your task has reached? I don't say that you should quit Ali and help Muʿawiyah; rather, I only invite you to make peace between me and you."

History claims that al-Ashʿath had some secret dealing with Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and was waiting for an opportunity to change the path of the battle in his favor. He, in the beginning of his reply, praised the Imam (ʿa) and rejected Utbah's claims, but in the end he implicitly announced his readiness to end the war and said, "You are not more needless than us to remain alive; I will think about it and announce my opinion." When Utbah returned to Muʿawiyah and informed him about the discussions, Muʿawiyah became happy and expressed, "He has announced his readiness for peace."

4. Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** said to Amr ibn al-Aas, "The most famous personality after Ali is Ibn Abbas. If he talks, Ali doesn't oppose him. Think about some alternative as soon as possible because the war will soon destroy our existence. We will never reach Iraq but the people of Syria will be completely annihilated."

Amr replied, "Ibn Abbas cannot be deceived; if we could deceive him, Ali, too, could be deceived."

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s insistence caused Amr to write a letter to Ibn Abbas that contained some poetic verses in his praise. When Amr showed the letter to Muʿawiyah, he said, "Your letter cannot be compared with your brilliant verses!"

The old man of deceit and trickery praised al-Abbas and his clan,

admonished al-Ashtar, and ultimately promised that after the war ended, Ibn Abbas would be a member of the council through which a caliph would be selected. When the letter reached Ibn Abbas, he showed it to Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who said, "May God kill Amr! What sort of a fraudulent letter this is. As soon as possible, write back to him and let your brother al-Fadl respond to his poetry, for he is a good poet." Thus, Ibn Abbas wrote, "Amongst all Arabs, I have never seen any one more disgraceful than you. You have sold your religion for an insignificant price and regarded the world as great like sinners and often acted like ascetics. If you want to earn God's pleasure, first get rid of the whimsical desire of the government of Egypt and return to your home. Ali and Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** aren't the same nor are the people of Syria and Iraq. I want God and you want the position of the governor of Egypt."

Then he attached the poetry composed by his brother al-Fadl which equaled Amr's verse with the letter and showed it to Imam Ali (ʿa) who **Error! Bookmark not defined.** replied, "If he is wise, he will not reply to your letter."

When the letter reached Amr, he showed it to Muʿawiyah and said, "You requested me to write a letter, but it has not been for your or my interest." Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** replied, "The heart of Ibn Abbas and Ali is the same and all of them are the children of Abd al-Muttalib."

5. When Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** realized that the movement of the Imam (ʿa) had increased, the circle had become narrow, and the Syrian position might be overtaken, he decided to write a letter directly to Ibn Abbas and remind him that this war was a symbol of enmity between the Hashemites and the Umayyads, trying to frighten him with the consequences of war. He also allured him and said, "If people are ready to make allegiance with you, I am ready too." When the letter reached Ibn Abbas, he replied with such harsh decisiveness that Muʿawiyah felt ashamed and said, "This is the result of my own work and now I won't write a letter to him for one year."

*Ammar*Error! Bookmark not defined. *and the transgressing group*

Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Yasir belonged to one of the noblest families in Islam. At the early days of the Holy Prophet's call to Islam, Ammar and his family responded to him and had to suffer terrible tortures in this path, which ended with the martyrdom of his father, Yasir, and his mother, Sumayyah, whom were severely tortured by Abu-Jahl. In

order to save himself from torture, Ammar pretended to have quit the faith of Islam. God approved of Ammar's act without any blame and revealed this Quranic verse: *Whoso disbelieveth in God, after his belief, save him who is forced thereto, and whose heart is still content with faith.* [16:106]

When this news reached the Holy Prophet (s),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** he expressed, "Ammar is saturated from head to foot with faith; and monotheism has intermingled with his blood and flesh." At that moment, Ammar arrived weeping bitterly, but the Holy Prophet (s) wiped his eyes and reminded him that if he again encountered such bottlenecks, he should express acquittal. This isn't the only verse that has been revealed about this self-sacrificing companion; rather, commentators mentioned two other verses as well:

Is he who payeth adoration in the watches of the night, while prostrating and standing, wary of the Hereafter and hoping for the mercy of his Lord, (to be counted equal with a disbeliever). [39:9][(1)]

Also the following: *Repel not those who call upon their Lord morning and evening, seeking His countenance.* [16:106][(2)]

After the emigration of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to Medina, Ammar became the servant of his saddle and participated in all minor and major military conflicts. Although the official caliphate wasn't of his liking, he cooperated with the institution of caliphate in the interest of Islam. The first thing the Prophet (s) did after his entrance into Medina was the building of a mosque. Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** endeavored more than anyone else and alone performed the work of more than one person. His honesty and commitment to Islam made others encourage him to perform more work than his capacity. One day, Ammar complained about this and said, "This group has killed me." The Holy Prophet (s) at that moment declared before all of those who were present in the assembly, "You will not die until a group of oppressors who will deviate from the path of truth kills you. Your last provision of the world will be milk."[(3)]

(1) Refer to *Tafsir al-Qurtubi, Tafsir al-Kashshaf* by al-Zamakhshari, and al-Suyuti's *al-Durr al-Manthur*.

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) This Prophetic tradition was quoted by historians and master scholars of Prophetic traditions. Al-Amini in *al-Ghadir* 9/21-2, has quoted its documents. Refer to *Tarikh al-Tabri* 3/21 and Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh* 3/157.

These words were circulated among the companions of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and later on transferred by mouth and Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** acquired a special position among Muslims since that day, because he was praised by the Holy Prophet (s) on various occasions. In the Battle of Siffin**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, the news of his death resulted in the trembling of hearts in Mu'awiyah's army and motivated some people to engage in research about this matter.

When Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** decided to step onto the battlefield, he stood up among the Imam's companions and started his speech as follows, "O servants of God! Rise to fight against a nation who seeks the vengeance of one who committed oppression against himself and commanded opposite to God's command, and was killed by the righteous group responsible for encouraging goodness and forbidding evil. The group whose world was threatened by his murder opened their tongue in complaint asking why he was killed. In reply, we said that he was killed for his evil deeds. They said, 'He had not committed anything wrong!' Yes, from their point of view Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** didn't commit anything evil. He placed Dinars at their disposal and they ate and grazed. They are the seekers of his blood; they have tasted the pleasures of the world and loved it. If they are arrested, they will be prevented from that eating and grazing.

The Umayyad people were not the first to accept Islam so that they should be worthy of ruling affairs in this way. They have deceived the people and drummed the slogan, 'Our leader has been killed as oppressed' in order to rule over the people with tyranny and oppression. They are a fraud and have reached this place as you can see for yourselves. If they hadn't raised this deceit, even two people wouldn't have made allegiance with them nor come to their support."(1)

Having delivered this speech, Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** went to the battlefield and his companions followed him. When he saw Amr, he shouted at him, "You sold your religion for the government of Egypt. Woe upon you! This is not the first time you have inflicted an injury upon Islam." When his eyes caught the pavilion of Ubaydullah ibn Umar,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** he cried, "May God annihilate you! You have sold your religion to the enemy of God and Islam." He

(1) Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh* 3/157; Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waq'at Siffin*, page 169; *Tarikh al-Tabri* 3/21.

replied, “We seek retaliation for the oppressed martyr,” and Ammar said, “You are lying, by God. I know that you will never seek God’s contentment. If you don’t die today, you will be killed tomorrow; if God punishes and rewards His servants, think right now what your intention is”

Circled by the Imam’s companions, Ammar prayed, “O God! If it is Your desire that I drown myself in this ocean, I will do so. O God, if I know that Your pleasure lies in putting the edge of my sword upon my stomach until it comes out from the other side, I will do so. O God, I know and You have already informed that today the act that makes You happy and contented more than anything else is none but to fight against this group; and had I known that there was an act other than this, I would have executed it.”

Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**’s distinguished personality and revolutionary precedents were not hidden from the Syrian army. The Holy Prophet’s prophecy about him had been circulated throughout the Islamic world. What was hidden from the people of Syria was Ammar’s participation in the Imam’s army. When they came to know about it**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, those influenced by the poisonous propaganda of Muʿawiyah decided to enquire about this matter. This illumination of truth touched Dhu’l-Kalaʿ who mobilized the people of the Himyar tribe in favor of Muʿawiyah and wanted to know the reality. So, he decided to contact Abu-Nuh, a chief of the Himyar tribe who lived in Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and was present in the Imam’s army. For this research, Dhu’l-Kalaʿ rode to the frontlines of Muʿawiyah’s army and cried from there, “I want to talk to Abu-Nuh.”

Hearing these words, Abu-Nuh come forward and asked, “Who are you?”

Dhu’l-Kalaʿ: “I am Dhu’l-Kalaʿ; I request you to come near me.”

Abu-Nuh: “I take refuge in God that I come alone but with the group that are under my command.”

Dhu’l-Kalaʿ: “You are under the refuge of God, the Prophet and Dhu’l-Kalaʿ. I want to talk to you about a matter. Come alone from the line and I will come alone and, in between the two lines, we will talk to each other.”

Then both of them came forward and started discussions.

Dhu’l-Kalaʿ: “I invited you because I heard a narration from Amr during the caliphate of Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.”

Abu-Nuh: “What is that narration?”

Dhu’l-Kalaʿ: “Amr quoted the Prophet of God (s) to have said: The people of

Syria and the people of Iraq shall confront each other. The truth and the leader of the guidance will be on one side and Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** will be on that side."

Abu-Nuh: "By God, Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** is with us."

Dhu'l-Kalaʿ: "Is he determined to fight in the war?"

Abu-Nuh: "Yes, by the God of Kaʿbah; he is more determined than me in fighting against you. I wish that all of you would be one person and I would behead all of you and, before anybody else, I would start with you because you happen to be my cousin."

Dhu'l-Kalaʿ: "Why do you have such a desire while I haven't severed kinship bonds with you, still regarded you as one of my close relatives, and I don't want to kill you?"

Abu-Nuh: "Under the banner of Islam, God has cut off a series of bonds and joined scattered people with one bond. I am on the truth and you are upon falsehood with the proof that you are helping the heads and parties of infidels."

Dhu'l-Kalaʿ: "Are you ready to enter with me in the Syrian lines so that you will neither be killed nor will anything be taken from you? You will not be forced to make allegiance; rather, the aim is to inform Amr about the presence of Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** in Ali's army, hoping that God will create peace and calm between the two armies."

Abu-Nuh: "I anticipate deceit from your companions and you."

Dhu'l-Kalaʿ: "I assure you about my words."

Abu-Nuh raised his head and prayed, " O God, You know what immunity Dhu'l-Kalaʿ has given me. You are aware of whatever I have in my heart; so please protect me." Having said these words, he accompanied Dhu'l-Kalaʿ and went to the Syrian army. When he reached near the pavilion of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Amr, he observed that both of them were encouraging the people to fight. Dhu'l-Kalaʿ looked at Amr and asked, "Are you ready to talk to an intelligent and truthful person?"

Amr: "Who is this man?"

Dhu'l-Kalaʿ, pointing to Abu-Nuh: "This man is the son of my uncle from the people of Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.**."

Amr to Abu-Nuh: "I could see in your face the signs of Abu-Turab."

Abu-Nuh: “On my face, there are signs of Muhammad (s) and his companions and upon your face there are signs of Abu-Jahl and Pharaoh.”

At this moment, one of the commanders of Muʿawiyah’s army rose and pulling his sword said, “Let me kill this liar, upon whose face there are indications of Abu-Turab for having so much courage to speak bad about us while being among us .”

Dhu’l-Kalaʿ: “By God, if you extend your hand towards him, I will cut your nose with my sword. This man is the son of my uncle and he has entered this assembly in my refuge. I have brought him to you in order to inform you about Ammar,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** about whom you were continuously arguing.”

Amr: “I swear to you in the name of God to speak the truth. Is Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** among you?”

Abu-Nuh: “I will not answer before you tell me about the importance of this question.”

Amr: “I heard the Prophet (s) say that Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** would be killed by a group of oppressors and it is impossible for Ammar to be separated from the truth.”

Abu-Nuh: “I swear by God except Whom there is no god; Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** is with us and is ready to fight you.”

Amr: “Is he really ready to fight us?”

Abu-Nuh: “Yes, I swear by God except Whom there is no other god; he told me in the Battle of the Camel that we would be victorious upon the companions of the camel and yesterday he said to me: If the Syrians attack us and force us to go until Hujar, we will not stop fighting because we know that we are on the right and our killed will be in Paradise; while theirs will be in Hellfire.”

Amr: “Can you arrange a meeting for me with Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**?”

Abu-Nuh: “I don’t know, but I will try.”

He left them and returned to the Army of the Imam (ʿa). He went towards the point where Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was and narrated the incident from beginning to end, and told that a group of twelve people, one of whom was Amr, want to meet him. Ammar announced his readiness for the meeting. Then, a group of cavalry at the

farthest point in the Imam's army started moving; Awf ibn Bashir separated himself from Ammar's group, arrived in the domain of the Syrian army, and asked in a loud voice, "Where is Amr ibn al-Aas?" They replied that he was there. Awf pointed the location of Ammar to him and Amr requested Ammar to move to the Syrian army. Awf replied that he wasn't unaware of his deceit.

Ultimately, it was decided that both of them should engage in discussion between the two lines with a group supporting them. Both the groups reached the agreed point but didn't give up precaution and, while dismounting, their hands were upon the sheaths of their swords. Amr, having seen Ammar,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** uttered the professions of Islam, but Ammar wasn't deceived by him. He cried, "Shut up! You renounced it during the life of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and after his demise! How dare you repeat these words now?" Amr shamelessly said, "Ammar! We haven't come for this issue. I found you the most sincere person among this army and I wanted to know why you were fighting us while our God and kiblah is the same."

Ammar,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** after a small discussion, said, "The Holy Prophet (s) informed me that I would be fighting against a group of treaty-breakers and another group of deviators from the path of truth. I have already fought the renegades and you are now the deviators from the path of truth. Yet, I don't know whether I will see the Apostates or not." Then, looking to Amr, he said, "O abortive, you heard the Prophet say about Ali: For whosoever I am Master, Ali is now his master. O God! Be a friend to his friends and a foe to his foes."

The discussions ended with the issue of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s slaying and both returned to their respective centers.

From this meeting, it becomes clear that what Amr really didn't want was the information about Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s presence in the Imam's army; therefore, instead of surrendering to Ammar's logic, he engaged him in debate on the issue of Uthman's murder**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to get his admittance that he had participated in that and, thereby, motivate the ignorant Syrians to rebel. Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Amr were fortunate that Dhu'l-Kalaʿ was killed before Ammar, because if he had remained alive after Ammar's martyrdom, it would have been impossible for Amr to deceive him anymore with his nonsense, and he would have

become a great problem for Muʿawiyah and Amr. After the killing of Dhu'l-Kalaʿ and the martyrdom of Ammar, Amr said to Muʿawiyah, "I don't know whose killing is better, Dhu'l-Kalaʿ or Ammar. By God if Dhu'l-Kalaʿ had lived after Ammar's killing, he would have taken all the Syrians to Ali**Error! Bookmark not defined.**."

Imam Ali's epic fighting

Unlike Muʿawiyah and Amr, Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, the commander-in-chief, did not place himself in a tent at the safest point and walls of heroes should take over the responsibility of his safety; rather, he discharged his duty by circulating among various divisions of his army and at the most dangerous moment fought in front of his army. The key to victory in these intense attacks was in his blessed and powerful hands. In these pages, we will mention his epic bravery the details of which can be found in books of history, including Nasr's *Waqʿat Siffin* and al-Tabari's *Tarikh al-Umam wa'l-Muluk*.

The right wing of the Imam's army after the killing of its commander Abdullah ibn Budayl scattered. Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** assigned Habib to crush the remaining portion of the right wing. Reciprocally, Sahl ibn Hunayf was assigned to reorganize this part of the army but these efforts didn't produce the desired results and the confused and astonished battalions of the right wing joined the center of the army that was under the command of the Imam (ʿa). Here, history speaks of the steadfastness and resistance of the soldiers of the Rabiʿah tribe and the fleeing of the soldiers of the Mudhar. Under such circumstances, the Imam (ʿa) personally entered the fight.

Zayd ibn Wahab, the war reporter, said: I saw the Imam (ʿa) in the storm of arrows that missed him passing through his neck and shoulders. The Imam's sons anticipated that he might be injured by the arrows; therefore, against his wishes, they surrounded him as his vanguards. Yet, the Imam (ʿa) opposing their wishes went ahead and forced the enemy to retreat. Suddenly, in front of him, his servant Kaysan was fighting Abu-Sufyan**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s slave, al-Ahmar, and the incident ended with Kaysan's martyrdom. Abu-Sufyan's slave full of arrogance and pride rushed towards the Imam (ʿa) with his naked sword but the Imam (ʿa) swiftly put his hand upon al-Ahmar's armor and pulled him and then lifting him up crashed him against the ground so strongly that his shoulder and arms were broken, and then he left him. At this moment, Imam al-Husayn (ʿa) and his brother Muhammad ended his life

and returned to the Imam (ʿa).

The Imam (ʿa) looked to his own beloved son al-Hasan (ʿa) and asked him why he didn't join his brothers. He replied, "O Commander of the Faithful! Those two were enough for him.

The closer the Imam (ʿa) reached the Syrian army, the more he accelerated his speed. Imam al-Hasan (ʿa),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** fearing that Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s army might surround him endangering his life, looked at him and said, "It won't hurt if you slow down a little so that the loyal and sincere soldiers of the Rabiʿah tribe can join you." The Imam (ʿa) replied, "For your father, there is a day destined that cannot be changed; neither stopping will postpone it nor haste towards the enemy bring it ahead. Your father doesn't care whether he goes to welcome death or death comes to welcome him."(1)

Abu-Ishaq narrated: On one of the days of Siffin, the Imam (ʿa) holding a small spear in his hand, passed in front of one of his own commanders, Saʿid ibn Qays, who asked, "Don't you fear that being so close to the enemy might cause you to be killed?" The Imam (ʿa) replied, "Fate is fate."(2)

Among the Syrian army, the greatest hero was Hurayth, Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s slave. He occasionally put on Muʿawiyah's clothing upon his body and started fighting while everyone imagined that Muʿawiyah was fighting. One day, Muʿawiyah called him and asked, "Stay away from fighting with Ali, but take anyone else to target with your spear." He went to Amr and told him what Muʿawiyah had said so. Amr, with whatever intentions, opposed Muʿawiyah's words and said, "Had you been from the Quraysh tribe, Muʿawiyah would certainly have liked it if you to kill Ali, but he doesn't like it that such an honor should be awarded to a man from another tribe than Quraysh. If you find an opportunity, you can attack Ali."

Incidentally, the same day the Imam (ʿa) came to the battlefield ahead of his cavalry troops, Hurayth, under the influence of Amr's words, called the Imam (ʿa) for combat. The Imam (ʿa) recited some epic war poetry, moved forward and started fighting. With the first stroke, he divided his body into

(1) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, pages 248-50; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.** 5/198-200; *Tarikh al-Tabari* 3/10-11; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh* 3/151-2.

(2) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, 250; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.** 5/199.

two halves. When Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was informed, he was affected more than expected and admonished Amr a lot for deceiving him.

The killing of Hurayth created a wave of fear and wrath in Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s army. Another hero, Amr ibn al-Hasis, stepped into the battlefield to take revenge from the Imam (ʿa), but Saʿid ibn Qays killed him.

One day, Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** came to the center of the battlefield and positioned himself between the lines of both armies, hoping to finish the argument upon Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** for the last time. The Imam (ʿa) shouted at Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, who called his special advisors and ordered, "Go and find out what he wants." Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s advisors came and asked, "O son of Abu-Talib! What do you want?" and the Imam (ʿa) answered, "I want to say just one word to him." The advisors returned to Muʿawiyah and said, **Error! Bookmark not defined.**"Ali wants to speak to you personally." So, accompanied by Amr, Muʿawiyah moved to the battlefield.

The Imam (ʿa) without paying any attention to Amr, looked at Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and said, "Woe upon you! Why should people kill each other for us? So far so good, step into the battlefield so that we can fight with each other and whoever is victorious should take the control of ruling affairs."

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** asked Amr, "What is your opinion about this matter?" and Amr answered, "Ali has entered from the gate of justice and if you turn it down, a spot of shame will appear upon you and your entire clan that won't be washed as long as Arabs are alive in the world."

Muʿawiyah said,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** "Amr! A person like me could never be deceived by you. None of the heroes fought Ali but the ground was saturated with their blood."

Having uttered this sentence, both of them returned to their own battle lines. The Imam (ʿa) smiled and returned to his place.

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** said to Amr: "How naive you are! I imagine that your proposal wasn't serious; rather, you were joking."

Hashim al-Mirqal was one of the brave commanders of the Imam's army

and his shining precedents in Islamic victories weren't hidden from anyone. It was known that his martyrdom would result in a significant loss of morale in the Imam's army. The fiery sermon of his son completely changed the situation and made the followers of his path more determined then ever. He took the banner of his father in his hand and looking to the sacrifice on the path of truth said, "Hashim was a servant of God. His sustenance was limited and his deeds were registered in the Record of Deeds. His death arrived and God Almighty called him and he joined God's countenance. He waged a war in this path with the cousin of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who is the first believer in the Prophet (s) and the most knowledgeable person regarding the code of religion. He is the diehard enemy of the enemies of God; those who violated God's prohibitions, ruled over people with tyranny and oppression, and Satan overcame them and presented their evildoings as attractive before their eyes. It is incumbent upon you to fight those who opposed the Prophet's traditions and oppose His friends. In this world, sacrifice your pure souls in the path of obedience of God so that you can receive the most exalted positions in the Hereafter. Suppose that there is no punishment, reward, hell and paradise, fighting in the saddle of Ali is superior than fighting with Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** the son of the liver-eater. Why should it not be so while you are hope to gain what should be hoped?"(1)

Fox in the lion's clutch

The intensity of fighting and pressure of war made things extremely harsh for the Syrians, and the igniters of the fire of war were forced to step onto the battlefield physically in order to silence the tongues of criticizers. Amr had an enemy named al-Harith ibn Nasr. Although both of them were the pupils of the same school of thought, they were rivals of one another. Al-Harith strongly criticized Amr for encouraging others to fight without participating in that fight. When Amr was confronted by the Imam (ʿa) who didn't give him any time and pierced him upon the ground with his lance, Amr, aware of the Imam's nobility, immediately exposed his anus and prevented the Imam (ʿa) from killing him. Imam Ali (ʿa) turned his face away from him and let the shameless coward flee.

(1) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, page 356; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.** 8/29.

Amr vs. Malik*Error! Bookmark not defined.*

The heroic bravery of Malik al-Ashtar in the battlefield had robbed Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s eyes of sleep. Therefore, he ordered Marwan ibn al-Hakam to terminate the life of Malik with the help of a group, but Marwan refused to accept this assignment and instead said, "The nearest person to you is Amr and you have promised to give him the government of Egypt. It would be very good if you assign this responsibility to him. He is the keeper of your secrets not me; he is the receiver of your munificence, while I am sitting in the circle of the deprived." Muʿawiyah became helpless and ordered Amr to fight Malik because his war strategy and matchless bravery had crushed the lines of Syrians. Amr, who was aware of Marwan's words, helplessly accepted the assignment. But where is a fly as compared to a phoenix? Amr's body started trembling while encountering Malik but he didn't accept the shame of escape from the battlefield. Recital of epic poems from both sides ended and they attacked each other. At the time of Malik's attack, Amr pulled himself backward and thus Malik's spear made a little scratch upon Amr's face. Amr being fearful for his life made the face wound as an excuse and covering his face with one hand and holding the bridle of the horse with the other fled from the battlefield. His escape resulted in the complaint of the soldiers to Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** as to why he had appointed such a coward and worthless person as their commander.

One day, al-Ashtar cried among the lines of the Iraqis, "Is there any one amongst you to sell his life for God' pleasure?" A youth stepped onto the battlefield. Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** sent an old man to fight with that young man. The rivals, while targeting their spears at each other, started to give their lineage, making it clear that they were a father and a son. They rode off and embraced each other putting their hands upon each other's necks. The father said, "My dear son! Come to the world!" His son replied, "My dear father! Come to the Hereafter. It is your responsibility that if I become greedy for the world and go towards the Syrian, you should prevent me from this path. What do you say about Ali and the righteous believers?" Ultimately, both of them decided to return back to their earlier positions. In a fight based upon defense of ideology, all bonds except the religious are weak and ineffective.

Abrahah, a commander in the Syrian army, was sad about the high casualties of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s army and witnessed that the Syrians were sacrificed for the carnal desires of Muʿawiyah who in order to hold on to his usurped government committed

such a horrible act. He shouted at the people of Yemen who lived in Syria, “Woe upon you, O people of Yemen! You want to destroy yourselves. Leave these two persons (Ali and Muʿawiyah) alone so that they can fight with each other and whoever is victorious we will follow him.” When these words reached the Imam (ʿa), he said, “He has spoken very truthful words. Since I entered the land of Syria, I have never heard such beautiful words.” The circulation of this news made Muʿawiyah tremble; he took to the farthest point of his army and said, “His intelligence has suffered some injury.” But the people of Yemen unanimously said that he was the most superior person among them from the point of view of religion, intelligence and bravery.

At this moment, in order to protect the prestige of the people of Syria, Urwah stepped into the battlefield and cried, “If Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** isn’t ready to fight with Ali, I am ready to fight.” The Imam (ʿa) said, “Both Muʿawiyah and Urwah are the same for me.” Having said that, he attacked him and with one stroke divided his body into two halves in a manner that each half fell to each side. Both of the armies were shocked with the intensity of Ali’s stroke. The Imam (ʿa) spoke with his dead body divided into parts and said, “By God Almighty Who sent the Prophet (s) with the truth; you have seen the fire and are now ashamed.” At that moment, Urwah’s cousin stepped in to take revenge and demanded a combat with the Imam (ʿa) who, with a stroke of his sword, killed the man.

Due to the unmatched epic bravery of Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** on the battlefield, the defeat of the people of Syria was ultimately set. Muʿawiyah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** witnessing this scene from the top of the hill, uncontrollably started admonishing the people of Syria: “May all of you be doomed! Is there anyone among you to assassinate Abu’l-Hasan when the two armies are covered in dirt and dust at the time of fighting? Al-Walid ibn Utbah who was standing near Muʿawiyah said to him, “You are the more deserving for this task as compared to others.” Muʿawiyah replied, “Ali has invited me to fight with him but I am never going to fight against him, because the army is for the safety of the commander.”

Eventually, he was able to encourage Busr**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Arta'ah to fight against the Imam (ʿa) and said to him, “Fight him under cover of dust and dirt.” Busr’s cousin, who had freshly arrived from Hijaz, prevented him from this task, but Busr because of the promise that he gave to Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** came to the

battlefield completely covered with iron and challenged the Imam (ʿa) in combat. The stroke of the Imam's spear knocked him down and he, like Amr, uncovered his anus and prevented the Imam (ʿa) from killing him.

The Battle of Siffin**Error! Bookmark not defined.** made Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** think of making peace, ending war and return the two armies to their previous locations. He tried through various means; some are which are mentioned here:

1. Negotiation with al-Ashʿath ibn Qays.

2. Negotiations with Qays ibn Saʿid.

3. Writing letters to the Imam (ʿa).

This plot, because of the strong morale of Imam's army, was annihilated until the incident of *laylat al-harir* occurred and the military organization of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was completely destroyed. However, the deceit of Muʿawiyah, simple-mindedness of Iraqis, and efforts and maneuvering of the Syrian fifth column within the Imam's army turned the tide in the benefit of Muʿawiyah. Here are the details of the meetings with Muʿawiyah:

1. Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** called his brother Utbah, an eloquent speaker, and asked him to meet al-Ashʿath ibn Qays who had substantial influence in the Imam's army and ask him to be compassionate to the remaining individuals of both parties. When Utbah told Muʿawiyah what al-Ashʿath had said, he replied, "He is inclined towards peace."

2. While the companions of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** from the Emigrants and Helpers circled around the Imam (ʿa), only two of the Helpers cooperated with Muʿawiyah who asked al-Nuʿman ibn Bashir to meet Qays ibn Saʿd, the brave commander in the Imam's army and get his opinion to pave the way for peace. In this meeting, he rested his case upon the losses that inflicted the opponents and said, "You have seen what happened; therefore, fear God regarding those who are still alive."

Qays rested his case upon the supporters of Ali (ʿa) and Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and said, "During the Holy Prophet's lifetime, **Error! Bookmark not defined.** we replied with our faces and throats to the enemy swords and spears so that the truth should become victorious, while the infidels were unhappy with this task. Right now, those who are helping Muʿawiyah aren't more than a fistful of former polytheists, nomads

and deceived Yemenis. Look at Ali, all the Emigrants, Helpers, and their followers have surrounded him, but Muʿawiyah has no one except you and your friend and neither have you participated in the wars of Badr and Uhud nor possess any precedence to Islam nor has a verse been revealed about you. In this situation, if you oppose me, your father committed the same mistake earlier."

3. The aim of these meetings was to prepare the ground for peace and compromise, but Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** failed to take what he aspired. Helpless, Muʿawiyah wrote this letter to the Imam (ʿa): "We all are the children of Abd-Manaf and none of us has superiority above the other." The Imam (ʿa) called his secretary Ibn Abi-Rafiʿ and ordered him to write the reply of the letter according to his dictation.

CHANGE IN THE COURSE OF THE BATTLE OF SIFFINERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED. AND THE ISLAMIC HISTORY

On Tuesday, the 10th of Rabiʿ I, 38 A.H., Imam Ali (ʿa) performed the Dawn Prayer at its earliest time while it was still dark. He was thoroughly aware of the fatigue of the Syrian army and knew that the enemy had retreated to its last bunker and, with a powerful swift attack, it was possible to reach the pavilion of Muʿawiyah, the conspirator of the entire battle. He ordered Malik to organize the army and Malik in full armor ordered the army commanders to organize their lines. Not long after the attack, indications of the enemy's defeat were clearly visible; they were fleeing from the battlefield.

At this point, a Syrian soldier stepped out and requested discussions with the Imam (ʿa) personally. The Imam (ʿa) between the lines engaged in discussions with him. He proposed that both the armies should retreat to their previous positions and the Imam should hand over Syria to Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. The Imam (ʿa) thanked him for his suggestion and said that he had thought about it since the beginning and couldn't find more than two alternatives; either accept or fight with rebellious infidelity to God and whatever has been revealed upon His prophet (s), because God is never pleased that sins and disobedience be committed in His kingdom and others watch in silence and renounce the encouraging of good and forbidding of evil. War with the insurgents is much better than embracing chains and bonds. The man was disappointed; he expressed grief and returned.

The intense war between the opponents started again. In this battle, whatever means available were utilized, including arrows, stones, swords, spears, and iron hammers that were falling on the heads of the opponents like rain. The battle continued until the morning of Wednesday. That night, Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s army yelped like dogs and history named that night of Wednesday as *laylat al-harir*. Malik moved among his soldiers and said, "O people, victory isn't further than the length of a bow."(1)

Imam Ali (ʿa), too, delivered this speech: "O people! You can see that our

(1) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, page 474; al-Daynawari, *al-Akhbar al-Tiwal*, page 187; al-Amini, *Aʿyan al-Shiʿah* 1/510.

task has ended, as nothing is left of the enemy except its last breath. The beginning of acts is appraised by their ends. In the morning, I will prosecute them in the divine court of justice and end their lives full of shame."

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was informed of the content of the Imam's speech; so, he said to Amr, "This is the same night on whose morrow Ali is going to finish the task of war. What should be done now?"

Amr said, "We must propose something that if they accept, it will create differences, and if they reject, it will divide them into groups. Invite them to the Book of God as a judge between you and them. In this way, you will accomplish your cherished desire. This matter was in my mind for a long time but I refused to mention it until its time came."

Muʿawiyah thanked his partner for the invincible plot and started to execute it. In the morning of Thursday, 13th of Rabiʿ I, the Imam's army was confronted with the unmatched trickery of Amr which saved the rebels of Syria and resulted in their renewed life. The Syrian army tied hanged copies of the Quran, including the biggest copy of Damascus, on spearheads and decorated their lines with those scriptures. Then all of them cried together, "The Book of God is the judge between us." The Iraqis heard their cries and their eyes saw the Book of God raised on spearheads. From the army of Syria, nothing was heard except their compassionate cries: "O Arabs, for your woman and daughters, consider God. Remember God for your religion. "After the Syrians, who will guard the borders of Syria and after the people of Iraq who will guard the borders of Iraq? Who will remain alive to fight the Romans, Turks and other infidels?"(1)

The touching scene and the compassionate cries completely baffled a majority of the Imam's soldiers, leaving them astonished and dumbfounded. The brave warriors who, only a few hours ago, were within one step of victory were nailed down in their places. Yet, the lion-hearted men like Adi, Malik and Amr ibn al-Hamq were aware of this trickery and they knew that the enemies, having reached the threshold of their complete annihilation, wanted to escape. They never surrendered to the Quran neither today nor in the future. Adi thus said to the Imam (ʿa), "Falsehood never has the strength to fight the truth. From both groups, people have

(1) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, page 481; *Tarikh al-Tabari* 3/26; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh* 3/160; al-Daynawari, *al-Akhbar al-Tiwal*, page 188; al-Masʿudi, *Muruj al-Dhahab* 2/400.

been killed and others wounded, and those who are left with us are more powerful than them; so don't pay attention to the cries of the Syrians as we are your followers."

Malik said, "Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** lacks a successor but you have a successor. If he has soldiers, he doesn't have soldiers like yours. Crush the iron with iron and seek help from God."

The third man said, "We haven't arisen for your support due to prejudice; rather, we responded to your help for the sake of God. Now that the truth has reached its end point and with your presence, we don't need to have an opinion."

On the other hand, al-Ashʿath, who placed himself in the circle of companions, made mysterious moves since the first day and his secret links with Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** had been more or less exposed, looked to the Imam (ʿa) and said, "Reply to the invitation of the community since it is more worthy of you to reply to their invitation and people like to live and don't like the war."

The Imam (ʿa) was aware of his wicked intentions; so, he replied, "Let me think about this matter."(1)

Muʿawiyah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** in order to arouse the sentiments of the Imam's army, ordered the son of Amr, another pseudo-ascetic of society, to position himself between the lines and invite them to accept the judgment of the Book of God. He too positioned himself between the two lines and said, "People! If our fighting was for the sake of religion, both the groups have completed their arguments; and if it was for the world, both of the groups have transgressed from the truth. We invite you to the Book of God, and if you had invited us, we would have accepted it. Consider the opportunity as a blessing."

These slogans deceived the simple-minded people of Iraq, and significant majority asked the Imam (ʿa) to accept their invitation. The Imam (ʿa), at such sensitive moments, always tried to enlighten the minds of the deceived people. He thus clarified, "O people of God! I am the best to accept an invitation to the Quran; but Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Amr, Ibn Abi-Maʿit, Habib and Ibn Abi-Sarh aren't the people of religion and the Quran. I know them better than you do. I have associated

(1) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, page 482; al-Masʿudi, *Muruj al-Dhahab* 2/401; Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah* 1/108.

with them since my childhood and they were the worst children and worst men. By God, they haven't raised the Quran because they resort to its judgment or want to act upon it; rather, this is an act of deceit and trickery. O servants of God! Give me your heads and arms as a loan so that the truth achieves its certain and absolute result and nothing is left to cut off the roots of oppressors."

While the sincere individuals were backing the Imam's opinion, suddenly twenty thousand Iraqi soldiers, completely armored, their foreheads showing black patches because of prostration, with their swords upon their shoulders, left the battlefield and returned. This group was headed by people who later on became the heads of the Apostates. They stood in front of the Imam's place and with extreme rudeness said, "O Ali, accept the invitation of the community or we will kill you the way we killed Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Affan. By God, if you don't accept their invitation, we will kill you!"

The commandership that until yesterday was respected with absolute obedience turned upside down; so, the Imam (ʿa) said, "I was the first to invite you to the Book of God and I am the first to accept its invitation because it is not permissible for me to invite to other than the Book of God. I fought with them because they did not pay attention to the commands of the Quran; disobeyed God, broke His contract, and threw His Book behind their backs. I warn you that they are deceiving you. They are not at all interested in acting upon the Quran."

The words of the Imam (ʿa) didn't have any effect upon them. The passage of time showed that they were the extremists lacking the capacity to understand and appreciate the truth and easily influenced by the empty slogans of the Syrian people. The more the Imam (ʿa) tried to advise them the more they insisted stubbornly that the Imam (ʿa) should order Malik to stop fighting. Nothing for an army during war is worse than division into two groups. What is worse than that is the rebellion of a simple-minded group unaware of the political farsightedness and intelligence of their commander. The Imam (ʿa) saw himself at the threshold of victory, but what he could do when the unity of his army was destroyed. The Imam (ʿa) didn't consider it expedient to fight against twenty thousand people armed and armored, called Yazid ibn Hani and said to him, "Go to the point where al-Ashtar is busy fighting and tell him to stop fighting as soon as possible and come back to me."

Yazid reached to the front line and said to al-Ashtar, "The Imam has

ordered that you should stop fighting and return to him." Malik said, "Give my regards to the Imam (ʿa) and tell him that this not the time to call me from the battlefield. Soon the breeze of victory will be touching the banner of Islam."

The messenger returned and said, "Malik doesn't consider the return as expedient and says that he is at the threshold of victory," but rebels looked at the Imam (ʿa) and said, "Malik's refusal from return is due to your order. You have sent him the message to remain steadfast in the battlefield." The Imam (ʿa) with complete politeness said, "I never talked to my messenger confidentially. Whatever I said you heard. How do you accuse me?" They said, "As soon as possible, order Malik to return from the battlefield; otherwise, we will kill you like Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** or hand you over alive to Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**." The Imam (ʿa) looked at Hani and said, "Whatever you have witnessed, inform Malik."

Malik was informed about the Imam's message; he answered, "This sedition is due to the raising of the Quran on spearheads. This is the plot of the son of al-Aas."

The messenger said, "Is it right that you stay here and the Commander of the Faithful be killed or handed over to the enemy?"

Hearing these words, Malik trembled, stopped fighting immediately, and returned to the Imam (ʿa). When his eyes caught sight of those wretched rebels, he said, "When you have the upper hand upon the enemy and you are at the threshold of victory, you will be tricked by the enemy's deceit. By God, they have quit the command of God and renounced the Prophet's traditions. Never accept their request and give me a little bit of time to finish the task at once."

The rebels answered, "Cooperation with you means participation in your mistake."

He expressing sorrow and said, "The distinguished individuals among you have been killed and your abject group has remained. Tell me when you ever were on the right. Were you upon truth when you fought and right now when you have pulled your hands off from fighting you are upon falsehood? Or at that time you were upon falsehood and now you are on the truth? If you imagine so, then all of our killed ones that you believe in their faith sincerity and piety must be in the fire."

The rebels said, "We fought in the path of God and for the sake of God have

pulled our hands off from the fighting. We don't follow you. Stay away from us."

Malik said, "You have been deceived and in this manner have been invited to cease fighting. O disgraced with black patches! I imagined your prayers and black spots upon your foreheads as an indication of your asceticism from the world and love for martyrdom. Right now, it is proved that as you are fleeing death, your attraction to the world made you make this decision. Woe upon you! You are like animals that eat their own excrement. Never will you see the face of dignity. Go away like the tyrants who took distance."

At this moment, the rebels on one side and Malik on the other cursed and said evil things about each other and lashed the faces of each others' horses. This scene was so painful and shocking for the Imam (ʿa) who cried out to them to move away from each other. Meanwhile, in front of the Imam's eyes, a cry of his approval of the arbitration of Quran was raised by the opportunist rebels in order to bind the Imam (ʿa) in an act that had already been done. The Imam (ʿa) remained silent. He didn't say a word and he was drowned in the ocean of thoughts about the future of Islam.

THE FARCE OF ARBITRATION

In this critical situation, Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** wrote to the Imam (ʿa), "The confrontation between us has been lengthy while each of us considers what he is demanding from the opponent as right, and none of the opponents is ready to obey the other. From each side, a lot have been killed and I am afraid that the future will be worse as compared to the past. We are responsible for this war and none is responsible for it except you and me. I have a proposal which can save the life and interests of the community, secure their blood, ensure religious peace, and renounce grudges. The proposal is that two people, one of my friends and one of yours, should judge according to the Quran. This is good for me, you and the renunciation of evil. Fear God in this matter and allow the verdict of the Quran, if you believe in it."(1)

Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** wrote back, "Oppression and lying destroy the religion and the world and expose his trembling before a slanderous person. You know that you don't have the capacity to compensate for the past. A group untruthfully through breaking the treaty declared their desire for the caliphate, interpreted the explicit command of God, and God exposed their lie. Fear the day when the end result of one's efforts is praiseworthy and the one who has given his guidance in the hands of Satan and hasn't engaged in fighting with him will feel ashamed, because the world had deceived him and he was charmed by it. You have invited to me to the Quran while you yourself don't believe in it; I therefore don't accept your invitation. However, I always accept the command of the Book of God."(2)

Al-Ashʿath ibn Qays who was accused of having mysterious relations with Muʿawiyah as noticed during the fighting insisted that he should be sent to Muʿawiyah to enquire his objective of raising the Quran. His encounter with the Imam (ʿa) was not sincere from the first day and the idea of peace entered his mind through discussions with Muʿawiyah's brother, Utbah. On

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(1) Al-Daynawari, *al-Akhbar al-Tiwal*, page 191; Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, page 493.

(2) Both of these letters have been narrated by Nasr ibn Muzahim in *Waqʿat Siffin,* pages 493-4 and Ibn Aʿtham al-Kufi *al-Fatuh* 3/322. The letter of the Imam (ʿa) with some minor variation in the content has also been mentioned in *Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.**, letter 48.

the *laylat al-harir*, he described the continuation of fighting as a basis of destruction for both opponents. In the sedition of raising the scriptures, he insisted that Ali (ʿa) should accept the invitation and mentioned the fatigue of the army.

This time, he requested permission to meet Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to receive the latest suggestions regarding peace. In the same discussion, it will be proved that he deprived the Imam (ʿa) of the power of selecting his representative and put the Imam's preference upon the back burner with some excuse and imposed the individual of his own preference who was completely against the Imam (ʿa). He didn't bring any fresh message; the armed group pressurized the Imam (ʿa) to accept the arbitration of the Quran. Due to this reason, the reciters of both groups assembled between the two armies, looked at the Quran and decided to activate the Quran's judgment. Then they retuned to their positions and voices were raised from both sides announcing acceptance of the arbitration.

The Quran doesn't speak by itself but those experienced in it make it speak; they look at it and find out the command of God. In order to accomplish this goal, it was decided that individuals from Syria and others from Iraq should be selected. The people of Syria were followers of Muʿawiyah and voted for **Error! Bookmark not defined.**whoever he selected. He would not select any one except Amr, the designer of the sedition. The people of Syria obeyed the creatures and disobeyed the Creator. When the chance of the Imam (ʿa) arrived, the pressing group [who later on assumed their name as apostates or Khawarij) that regarded the issue of arbitration as the greatest sin and repented for accepting it and also asked Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to repent, imposed two conditions upon the Imam (ʿa): 1. accepting the arbitration, and 2. selecting the judge of their choice and not of the Imam's choice.

This part of history teaches a lesson through the following dialogue:

The pressing group: "We accept Abu-Musa al-Ashʿari**Error! Bookmark not defined.** as a judge."

The Imam (ʿa): "I would never agree for him and never give him such a right."

The pressing group: "We would not vote for anyone else, because he was the only one who prevented us from this and called it sedition."

The Imam (ʿa): "Abu-Musa, in the prime days of my caliphate, left me,

prevented people from supporting me, and in order to escape punishment fled and I pardoned him; so, he returned to me. I would select Ibn Abbas for the judgment."

The pressing group: "For us, there is no difference between you and Ibn Abbas."

The Imam (ʿa): "I would select Malik."

The pressing group: "He has ignited the fire of war and, according to his judgment, we are guilty."

The Imam (ʿa): "What is his judgment?"

The pressing group: "He wants people to kill each other until accomplishing his and your desires."

The Imam (ʿa): "If Muʿawiyah is completely free in the selection of a judge, I should have the right to select my judge. In front of a man from the Quraysh tribe, there must be another from the same tribe. You should select Ibn Abbas, because Amr doesn't tie a knot that cannot be untied by Ibn Abbas; he doesn't make a task strong but Ibn Abbas makes it weak and doesn't make a task weak but Ibn Abbas makes it strong."

Al-Ashʿath: "Amr and Ibn Abbas belong to the Mudhar tribe; they shouldn't sit for the judgment.

No one asked this man what law demanded this, nor its explanation.

The Imam (ʿa): "I am afraid that this Yemeni of yours will be deceived, because Amr is a person that doesn't hesitate in utilizing any deceit to accomplish his goal."

Al-Ashʿath: "By God, if in any place one of those two judges is Yemeni, it is better for us even though he issues a judgment against us. But when both of them are from the Mudhar tribe, it is undesirable for us even if he issues a judgment in our favor."

The Imam (ʿa): "Now I know why you are insisting on Abu-Musa.**Error! Bookmark not defined.** Go and do what ever you want to do."(1)

Error! Bookmark not defined. When Abu-Musa was the governor of Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, he prevented people from helping

(1) Al-Daynawari, *al-Akhbar al-Tiwal*, page 192; Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Imamah* wa'l-*Siyasah* 1/113; *Tarikh al-Yaʿqubi* 2/189; Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, page 499; al-Masʿudi, *Muruj al-Dhahab* 2/402.

the Imam (ʿa) to uproot the Sedition of the Camel and his excuse was the tradition of Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "Whenever sedition is created in the community, stay away from it." Now such a person wanted to be the representative of the Imam (ʿa) in the case of arbitration although he was known for simple-mindedness and he was an opponent of the Imam (ʿa).

The Imam (ʿa) tried to prevent the pressing group from their stubbornness; he gathered all his commanders and mentioned the issues in a general assembly, "Be aware that the Syrians have selected the nearest person that they like and you have selected one with whom you were not happy for the arbitration. You are dealing with people like Abdullah ibn Qays who said yesterday, 'War is sedition, cut off the ropes of the bows and put your swords under their sheaths.' If he is truthful, then why did he participate in the battlefield without any compulsion? And if he is lying, then he is an accuser. Break the chest of Amr with Ibn Abbas and utilize this opportunity given by your opponents and take control of the front of Islam. Don't you see that your cities have been transgressed and your lands have been targeted by the arrows of your enemies?"

The speech of the Imam (ʿa) didn't produce any effect among his commanders except a series of personal meetings. Due to this reason, al-Ahnaf ibn Qays said to the Imam (ʿa), "I have examined Abu-Musa and found him very shallow. He is the person that confronted Islam right from its beginning. If you like, appoint me for the arbitration and if you don't like this idea, appoint me as a second or third judge so that you can see that any knots tied by Amr will be untied by me, and he won't be able to open the knot that is tied by me."

The Imam (ʿa) presented al-Ahnaf to the army but being so misguided and stubborn they refused to vote for anyone except Abu-Musa. This selection was so tragic that a Syrian poet in his poetry revealed the truth and said:

If the people of Iraq had been steadfast in their opinion,

Selection of Ibn Abbas would have saved them from misguidance.

But they selected an old Yemeni who couldn't count five and six.

Let Ali know that Abu-Musa isn't a trustworthy person.

Later on, it will be shown how these very people who imposed peace with Muʿawiyah upon Imam Ali (ʿa) and tied his hands in the selection of the representative were the first to regard the issue of arbitration as the greatest sin and after writing a contract, they forced its cancellation upon

him. But it was impossible for the Imam (ʿa) to break the contract and again listen to the words of foolish pseudo-ascetics. Let us see how the content of arbitration was written and whether the Imam (ʿa) was forced by the opinion of this pressing group for the third time, too.

The farce of arbitration on the land of Siffin doesn't have any precedence in Islamic history. The Commander of the Faithful (ʿa) who was within the two steps of victory, and if his ignorant and unintelligent companions had not backed out from his help or, at least, not created any obstruction in his path, he would have plucked the eyes of the sedition and ended the government of the evil Umayyad dynasty and completely changed the face of Islamic history and civilization. Because of the trickery of Amr that appealed to some foolish and ignorant soldiers, he was prevented from continuing the fight and achieving victory that was within reach. These foolish friends did much more damage than the intelligent enemy by imposing four matters upon the Imam (ʿa) that first hurt their own eyes and later hurt the eyes of other Muslims. These consist of the following:

1. Acceptance of cease-fire and the judgment of the Quran;

2. Acceptance of Abu-Musa as a representative;

3. Deletion of the title: Commander of the Faithful, from the contract; and

4. Insistence on breaking the contract after it was signed.

It was decided that the heads of both groups should prepare the contract. On one side were the Imam (ʿa) and his companions and on the other were Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Amr and a group of his guards. In order to write the contract, two yellow papers with their beginning and end stamped with the seals of the Imam (ʿa), Muʿawiyah and the words: Muhammad is the prophet of God, were prepared for writing. The responsibilities of dictation and writing were assumed by the Imam (ʿa) and his secretary Ubaydullah ibn Abi-Rafiʿ respectively. The Imam (ʿa) started with the words: "In the Name of God the Beneficent and the Merciful. This is the declaration that the Commander of the Faithful and Muʿawiyah and their followers have agreed upon for the arbitration on the basis of the Book of God and traditions of the Prophet (s)."

At this moment, Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** jumped from his place and said, "He is truly mean who accepts a person as the commander of the faithful and then fights against him." Amr immediately said to the writer of the Imam (ʿa), "Write the name of Ali and his father. He is your commander not ours." Al-Ahnaf said to him, "Don't erase the

title: Commander of the Faithful; I am afraid of its never returning back to you again. Don't surrender even if it results in killing and spilling of blood." The discussion took a long time and part of the day ended in discussing this matter. The Imam ('a) didn't accept, but al-Ash'ath insisted.

In this confrontation, the Imam ('a) brought the bitter memories of the al-Hudaybiyah Truce upon his tongue and said, "I was the writer of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. On this side was the Prophet of God and on the side of the polytheists was Suhayl ibn Amr. I prepared the document of the truce: 'This truce is between Muhammad, the Prophet of God, and Suhayl ibn Amr,' but the representative of the polytheists said to the Prophet (s) 'I will never sign a document in which you are introduced as the Prophet of God. If I knew that you are the Prophet of God, I would never fight you. I must be a tyrant and oppressor if I prevent you from circumambulation God's House in case you are the Prophet of God. Rather, write: Muhammad son of Abdullah.' At that moment, the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** said to me, 'Ali, I am the Prophet of God and I am the son of Abdullah. By deleting the title of Prophet of God from my name, my prophethood will not go away. Write: Muhammad ibn Abdullah.' Yes, that day the pressure of the polytheists increased upon me to delete the phrase: Prophet of God, from his name. If that day the Holy Prophet (s) made a peace treaty with the polytheists, today I am writing it with their children. My means and ways and the Prophet's are the same."

Amr said, "How strange this is! You compare us with the infidels while we are believers." The Imam ('a) replied, "When have you even been not a supporter of the infidels and the enemy of Muslims? You are like your mother who has given birth to you." Having heard these words, Amr rose from the assembly and said, "By God, after this, I will never sit with you in any meeting."

The pressure of the insincere friends of the Imam ('a) to delete the title manifested a fresh instance of oppression, but for confrontation, a group of the Imam's righteous companions with naked swords came and said, "Give us the order to execute it." Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Hunayf advised them, "I was present when al-Hudaybiyah Truce was written, and we are now following the path of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**." At this juncture, Imam Ali ('a)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** said, "The Holy Prophet (s), on that day, informed me about this incident when he said: There will be such a day for you and you will do the same thing while helpless."

Content of the peace treaty

The conflict between the opponents ended with the flexibility of the Imam (ʿa) and inspiration from the Holy Prophet's method; so, he ordered that his name should be written without the title. The articles points of the treaty read:

1. Both groups agreed that they would accept the arbitration of the Quran without transgressing its commandments. Except the Quran, nothing would unite them; so, they would make the Book of God their judge from the beginning until the end regarding all their differences.

2. Ali and his followers selected Abdullah ibn Qays (Abu-Musa**Error! Bookmark not defined.**) as their representative, and the followers of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** appointed Amr.

3. From both of them, a promise is obtained like the contract that God has taken from his servants, that they should consider the Book of God as their leader; wherever they find its judgment, they should not transgress; and wherever they don't, they should resort to the traditions of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. They will not ignite differences, follow their whimsical desires, or enter into doubtful tasks.

4. Abdullah ibn Qays and Amr ibn al-Aas have taken oaths from their leaders that the judgment of both of them, according to the Book of God and the traditions of the Prophet (s), would be acceptable. They would not break it, select anything else, and the life, wealth and families of people living in the domain of the governments of both leaders be respected as long as they do not infringe the divine limits.

5. If one of the judges dies before discharging his duty, the leader of that group will select a just person in his place under similar conditions; and if one of the leaders dies before the judgment, his followers will select another.

6. A commitment was taken from both judges that they would try their best to judge fairly and wouldn't make an unfair judgment. If they don't act upon their commitment, the community will dismiss them and won't have any commitment with them. To act upon this contract is incumbent upon chiefs, judges and the community; and from now on, until the duration of the signing of this contract, the life, wealth and families of people are under immunity. The arsenals should be put down and the paths should be peaceful, and there will be no difference in treatment between the present and the absent.

7. The two judges reside at a point between Iraq and Syria visiting no one except their folks. They have the time to finish their judgment until the end of the month of Ramadan;**Error! Bookmark not defined.** if they wish, they can finish it earlier or delay it until the Hajj season.

8. If the judges don't judge according to the Book of God and the traditions of the Holy Prophet (s),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** Muslims continue their fighting and there will be no commitment between the opponents. The Islamic community is obliged to act according to this judgment and all of them should act as a united community against those who behave unjustly or decide to break it.(1)

According to al-Tabari, ten people from each side signed the treaty. Among the people who signed from the Imam's side were Abdullah ibn Abbas, al-Ashʿath ibn Qays, Malik al-Ashtar, Saʿid ibn Qays, Khabbab ibn al-Aratt, Sahl ibn Hunayf, Amr ibn al-Hamq, Imam al-Hasan, and Imam al-Husayn. Both the judges decided to meet in a front region between Syria and Hijaz. Four hundred observers from both sides were dispatched to supervise the arbitration.

After completion of the treaty, it was decided that the people of Syria and Iraq should be informed about the result of negotiations. Al-Ashʿath presented the treaty to the Syrians and Iraqis. At first, no opposition was witnessed, but a group from the Anzah tribe showed opposition and, for the first time, from the throats of two youths the slogans: "There is no command except God's" was raised. They came out unsheathing their swords and attacked Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s army. Finally, they were killed near the tent of Muʿawiyah. When the articles of the treaty were recited for the Mudhar tribe, the chief repeated the same slogan and added, "There is no command except God's even if it is hated by the polytheists." Then he compiled the following anthem:

Why did Ali agree to the judgment regarding the spilled blood

*If he had fought with Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, it would have been batter.*

Al-Ashʿath continued his assignment and when he encountered the banners of the Banu-Tamim tribe and recited the Treaty of Judgment for them, one of them rose and said, "Do you prefer men upon God's religion and appoint them as judge? The command of judgment belongs to God only; what is the

(1) Al-Masʿudi, *Muruj al-Dhahab* 2/403; al-Daynawari, *al-Akhbar al-Tiwal*, page 195; *Tarikh al-Tabari* 2/29.

end of those killed, O Ashʿath?" Then he attacked al-Ashʿath with his sword but it struck his horse throwing him upon the ground, and had he not been rescued by others, al-Ashʿath would have been killed by that man.

Having toured the Iraqi army, al-Ashʿath returned to the Imam (ʿa) and pretended as though the majority of the Imam's supporters were contented with the treaty except for one or two groups. It wasn't very long that the slogans of opposition were raised from every side and people said, "We would never allow that a statesman should govern the religion of God. God has ordered that Muʿawiyah and his companions should be killed or obey us. The arbitration was negligence and we have returned from it and repented. You should also repent; otherwise, we are disgusted with you."(1)

The simple-minded companions of the Imam (ʿa) wanted to impose the fourth task upon him of declaring the treaty as unseen and regard it as null and void on the same day, but this time the Imam (ʿa) severely resisted and shouted, "Woe upon you! Are you speaking these words now? Now that we have agreed, should we return to war again? Doesn't God command us to honor the contracts?"

The Imam's words weren't effective. They renounced obedience to him, regarded the treaty as misguidance, and rebelled, creating the faction known as *Khawarij*. They did not cooperate with any government; rather, they selected for themselves a special ideology, methods and tactics.

The Imam (ʿa) said about this matter, "We haven't accepted people as rulers; rather, we have made the Quran the ruler, but the Quran doesn't speak with a tongue but requires a speaker, and that speaker announces its words. When the Syrian wanted us to make the Quran the judge, we were not those who turned their face away from it, because God says in the Quran: *If you have a conflict about some issue, resort to the Quran and the Prophet*.' Resorting to God is a return to the Quran and resorting to the Prophet (s) is returning to his tradition."(2)

He uttered a sentence that requires attention: "Verily, if the judgment is

(1) Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.** 2/238.

(2) *Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.**, sermon 125. Al-Tabari in *Tarikh al-Tabari* 3/37, describing the incidents of the year 37 of hegira, and Ibn Athir, in *al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh* 3/166, narrated these words in summary as compared to what is mentioned in *Nahj al-Balaghah*. Sibt Ibn al-Jawzi, in *Tadhkirat al-Khawass*, page 100, Shaykh al-Mufid in *Kitab al-Irshad*, page 129, and al-Tabarsi in *al-Ihtijaj* 1/275, quoted this sermon.

made through the Quran, we are the most deserving; and if the judgment is made from the tradition of the Prophet (s), we will still be the most superior."

Ultimately, the Battle of Siffin**Error! Bookmark not defined.** that engaged the Imam and his companions' precious time for several months ended, killing about twenty five thousand persons from the Iraqi army and forty five or ninety thousand from the Syrian army. Both armies returned to their native lands.

Since the task of writing the document, signatures and its transmittal was ended, the Commander of the Faithful (ʿa) freed all the prisoners of war as a one-sided act, while before the freedom of the Syrian prisoners, Amr insisted on executing the prisoners of the Imam (ʿa). When Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** witnessed the Imam's exalted act, he trembled severely and said to Amr, "If we execute the prisoners, we will be insulted by friends and foes." The Imam's method with the prisoners during the continuation of war was different. If a person became prisoner, he freed him, but if he had killed one, he would be killed in retaliation. If the freed person was captured again, he would be immediately executed, since his return to the enemy revealed his filthy intentions.

Imam Ali (ʿa), after moving from Siffin to Kufa,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** wasn't negligent about the reality of that treaty; he continuously sent relevant recommendations to Ibn Abbas who was dispatched as the head of four hundred people to that area. Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** too wasn't negligent about his matter and he dispatched four hundred to that area. The difference between the companions of the Imam (ʿa) and the followers of Muʿawiyah was that they Syrians with their eyes and ears closed were absolutely obedient to their chief, and whenever a letter came from Muʿawiyah, they never asked what he had written in it, while whenever a letter reached the hands of Ibn Abbas, the necks were raised to know what order the Imam (ʿa) had given to him. Ibn Abbas admonished them and said, "Whenever a message arrives from the Imam (ʿa), you ask what message has come. If I hide it, you ask why it has been hidden; and if I open it for you, my secrets are leaked and nothing remains as a secret for me."[1]

(1) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin*, page 233; *Tarikh al-Tabari* 3/37; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh* 3/167; al-Daynawari, *al-Akhbar al-Tiwal*, page 198.

IMAM ALI'S RETURN FROM SIFFIN TO KUFAERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

The issue of arbitration was an incident that the Imam (ʿa) was forced to accept with extreme reluctance after all options were closed upon him. If he had resisted it, the internal opposition **Error! Bookmark not defined.**would have come to fight with him to result in total annihilation of his loyal companions. When the farce of arbitration ended, the Imam (ʿa) returned to Kufa to dispatch his representative and the group of observers to solve the problem**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. He repeated the same supplicatory prayer that the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** said at the start of the return journey: "O God, I seek refuge in You from the hardship of the journey, returning, and loss in family and wealth."

Having said this prayer, he took the path and returned to Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. When he reached the city of Sanduda, the people of Banu-Saʿid tribe came to welcome him and invited him to enter their city, but he didn't accept their invitation. When he reached near al-Nukhaylah, he encountered an old man sitting in the shade of his home. The effects of sickness were apparent upon his face; so the Imam (ʿa) asked him, "Why has your color faded? Are you sick?" "Yes, I am," the old man answered. "Do you hate sickness?" the Imam asked and the old man answered, "Yes, I do. I don't like being sick." The Imam further asked, "Falling sick increases your rewards with God. Congratulations! God's blessing has engulfed you and your sins have been forgiven. What is your name?" As the old man told his name in details, the Imam (ʿa) asked, "Did you participate in my wars?" "No," the old man answered, "I had the desire to do that, but my physical incompetence prevented me." The Imam (ʿa) said, "Listen to the words of God Who says: *Not unto the weak, nor unto the sick, nor unto those who find naught to spend is any fault (to be imputed if they stay at home) if they are true to God and His messenger. Not unto the good is there any road (of blame). God is Forgiving, Merciful.*" The Imam (ʿa) added, "What do people say about my task with the Syrians?" and the old man answered, "Your foes are happy with it, but your real sincere companions are angry and sad."

The Imam (ʿa) agreed, "You are right. May God make your sickness as forgiveness of your sins, since there is no reward in sickness except forgiveness of sins. Rewards are related to your words and deeds, but at the

same time, one should not be negligent of his good intentions, because God Almighty makes lot of groups enter Paradise because of their good intentions." Having said these words, the Imam (ʿa) continued on his path. After traveling some more, he met Abdullah al-Ansari and he was interested to know about the opinion of people about his imposed peace with Muʿawiyah; so he asked him, "What do people think about my task?" Abdullah answered, "People have two opinions; some of them like it while others are unhappy with it; and in accordance with the language of Quran, they contentiously have differences." "What is the opinion of the experts?" the Imam asked and Abdullah answered, "They say that Ali was surrounded by some groups, but he scattered them. He had a strong fort but destroyed it. When will Ali be able to assemble as many as those that he has scattered and when will he build the foundation like the one he has destroyed? If he had continued fighting with the same group who were in his command until become victorious or being annihilated, he would have done the right thing from the point of view of intelligence and politics."

The Imam (ʿa) commented, "Did I destroy, or the Khawarij did? Did I scatter the assembly or did they produce differences and divide into two groups? The best thing was that I should have continued fighting together with my loyal companions when a group raised the banner of opposition. It wasn't that I neglected that opinion. I was ready to give up my life with a happy face, but I looked at al-Hasan and al-Husayn and saw that they would precede me to martyrdom. I was afraid that with the death of these two, the lineage of the Holy Prophet (s) would be sheared off. Therefore, I didn't take up this task. By God, if next time I encounter the Syrians, I will select this path and never bring those two with me."

The candid and transparent discussion of the Imam (ʿa) with Abdullah clearly explains two things:

A. The environment in which the Imam (ʿa) lived was free and people were free to express their different opinions about the government. Favorable and opposing opinions in the sight of the Imam (ʿa) were acceptable and until the opponents didn't use their arms, they were provided with absolute freedom.

B. Safeguarding the Holy Prophet's lineage that has been mentioned in the Quran as *Kawthar* is the most important duty. The continuation of the Imam's fighting against Muʿawiyah and the internal opponents whose number wasn't very small would lead to the martyrdoms of Imam Ali and his two sons; thus uprooting of the Holy Prophet's lineage and annihilating

Imamate. The divine intention of keeping the lineage of the infallible Imams until the appearance of Imam al-Mahdi forced Imam Ali (ʿa) to accept the farce of arbitration. This wasn't the only reason but one of the reasons, as explained by the Imam (ʿa).

The Imam (ʿa) continued his journey until he arrived at the quarter of Banu-Awf tribe. On the right side of the road, he noticed seven or eight graves at an elevated point. He asked whose graves they were and the answer came, "Khabbab ibn al-Aratt died after your dispatch to Siffin and willed that he should be buried upon an elevated point. His burial at this location made others bury their dead people surrounding his grave at this point." The Imam (ʿa) prayed God's mercy for Khabbab and said, "He accepted Islam with sincerity of heart, migrated voluntarily, participated in jihad far a life, and ultimately encountered weakness. God never wastes the rewards of the righteous ones." Then, he spoke to the souls of the dead as follows: "Salutations be upon you! You are living in frightening lands and places without water and plants, men, women and Muslims. You took precedence over us and we are following in your footsteps and after a while will join you. O God! Forgive us and them and protect us and them. Thank God that He made the earth a place of assembly for the living and the dead. Thank God that He created us from it and will return us to it and make us part of it. How good it is for those who remembered the Hereafter and worked for the Judgment Day and are contented regarding their needs!"[1]

The Imam (ʿa) then continued his journey, passed through the quarter of the Hamdan tribe and heard women weeping for those killed in the Battle of Siffin. He called Shurahbil and said, "Recommend self-control to your women and advise them not to cry." He replied, "If the issue was limited to a few homes, practicing this advise was possible, but one hundred and eighty people from this tribe were killed and there is no home where there is no mourning, but we men never cry over them and are happy with their martyrdom." The Imam (ʿa) invoked God's blessings upon the dead. Shurahbil wanted to bid farewell to the Imam (ʿa), but the Imam rode on the horse and said to him, "Go back, because this sort of farewell results in arrogance of the ruler and abjectness of believers."

When he entered Kufa, he selected four hundred people as observers for the proceedings of the arbitration, appointed Shurayh as their commander and Abdullah Ibn Abbas as their religious leader, and the time arrived to

(1) *Tarikh al-Tabri* 3/34; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh* 3/164; Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waq'at Siffin*, pages 529-30.

dispatch his imposed representative. The Imam (ʿa) knew for sure that Abu-Musa was indifferent to his leadership and people, too, knew his simple-mindedness and stupidity. Therefore, the Imam (ʿa) and people held discussions with him at the moment of his departure.

The unanimous opinion of friends and foes about Abu-Musa's simple-mindedness and shallowness made them call him an incapacitated person. But what could Ali (ʿa) have done? His simple-minded friends imposed both the matters upon him; the acceptance of the arbitration and the person who would represent him in that farce. Before dispatching Abu-Musa to Dawmat al-Jandal,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** talked to him, saying, "Judge on the basis of the Book of God and don't put your steps any farther."

When Abu-Musa started his journey, the Imam (ʿa) said, "I am sure that you will be deceived in this task."

Ubaydullah said, "If such is the case, why you are dispatching him?" and the Imam (ʿa) answered, "If God had treated his servants according to His knowledge, then He wouldn't have sent messengers for them and not admonished them through them."

Shurayh ibn Hani, the commander who was dispatched as the chief of a group of four hundred people, took the hand of Abu-Musa and said to him, "You have taken a great responsibility upon your shoulders, a task whose crack will be irreparable. Know that if Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** gets domination over Iraq, then Iraq will not exist anymore, but if Ali gets domination upon the Syrians, there won't be any problem for them. In the beginning of the Imam's government, you took distance from him; if you repeat it, the presumptions will turn into certainty and hope into despair."

Abu-Musa replied, "The group who thought me unworthy to judge want that I should defend them from falsehood and attain truth for them."(1)

Al-Najjashi, a famous poet in the Imam's army and an old friend of Abu-Musa, advised him to respect justice and truth, but Abu-Musa replied, "I ask God to enlighten my horizon and do my duty according to His pleasure."

The last person who bade farewell to Abu-Musa was al-Ahnaf. He took the

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Imamah wa'l-Siyasah* 1/115; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.** 2/245.

hand of Abu-Musa and said to him, “Try to understand the grandeur of this task and know that the task will continue. If you destroy Iraq, then you are not an Iraqi. Exercise piety against disobedience to God so that He increases your worldly and otherworldly benefits. When you encounter Amr, don’t offer him salutations first, although taking precedence is a tradition in Islam but he is not worthy of it. Don’t put your hand in his hand because your hand is the trust of the community. Suggesting to be seated in the front of the Assembly is deceit and fraud, be careful not to speak with him alone in a room, because he could plant secret witnesses who could testify against you.”

Then, al-Ahnaf, in order to examine Abu-Musa’s sincerity with respect to the Imam (ʿa), suggested, “If you don’t reach an agreement with Amr about the Imam (ʿa), you can suggest that the Iraqis appoint a caliph from the Iraqis living in Syria, and if he doesn’t accept it, suggest that the Syrians can select a caliph from the people of Quraysh living in Iraq.”(1)

Having heard these words, which clearly meant the Imam’s dismissal and appointment of another person as caliph, Abu-Musa didn’t show any reaction. Al-Ahnaf immediately returned to the Imam and informed him about his talks with Abu-Musa, saying, “We are dispatching one to seek our own right who doesn’t care about your being dismissed and renounced.” The Imam (ʿa) replied, “Remember this; this exercise will result in our sorrow.”(2)

Saʿd ibn Abi-Waqqas was one of those who refrained from paying homage to Imam Ali (ʿa), but he didn’t oppose or confront him. When the War of Siffin started, he retired to the quarter of Banu-Salim and continuously followed up the news from the opponents. He was drowned in these thoughts when he saw a rider coming to him. When he came near, he found that it was his son Umar. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**This Umar ibn Saʿd was the person who killed Imam al-Husayn (ʿa) and his companions in Muharram, AH 61. His father enquired about the situation and Umar informed him about the imposed farce of arbitration and the assembly to be held in Dawmat al-Jandal.**Error! Bookmark not defined.** He asked him to reach that area so that he would be selected as caliph. The father replied, “Take it easy, my son! I have heard from the Prophet (s) that after him sedition would occur and the best person would be the one who hides from it and takes distance. The issue of caliphate is an issue that I didn’t

(1) *Ibid*.

(2) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Waqʿat Siffin,* page 537.

enter into since the first day and will never do. Yet, if it is necessary to pledge allegiance, I will pledge it to Ali. People threatened me with the sharpness of sword but I decided that it would be better than Hellfire."(1)

Saʿd thought that cooperating with any group was full of sedition and imagined its end as fire, but he preferred the stance of Ali (ʿa) as compared to Muʿawiyah. He thus composed poetic **Error! Bookmark not defined.** verses in praise of Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and admonished Muʿawiyah. These were also heard by his son:

If I have to get involved in this act one day,

I will follow Ali until he shows his inclination.

Regarding the blindness of his heart, it is sufficient to say that he considered following a leader, whose leadership was explicitly clear for every one as entering into sedition, whereas after the murder of Uthman,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** all Emigrants and Helpers made allegiance to him. He never realized that turning his face away from such a divinely appointed Imam would lead him to Hellfire.

A group of companions like Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr, Abdullah ibn Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and al-Maghirah ibn Shuʿbah and their children kept themselves away from Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** but they didn't cooperate with Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. After the fighting was over, they came to Damascus on the request of Muʿawiyah who requested al-Maghirah to help him and inform him about the thinking of the judges. Al-Maghirah accepted this assignment.**Error! Bookmark not defined.** In order to learn about the opinion of the judges, he met each of them separately. First, he asked Abu-Musa, "What is your opinion about the individuals who practiced piety from this conflict and took distance from spilling of blood?" Abu-Musa replied, "They are the most righteous persons! Their backs are light from the burden of blood and their stomachs are empty from forbidden wealth!"

Then, he went near Amr and asked the same question. Amr replied, "The individuals sitting in isolated corners are the worst of persons; they have neither identified truth nor denied falsehood." Al-Maghirah returned to Damascus and said to Muʿawiyah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** "I have examined and smelt both of the judges. Abu-Musa is going to dismiss

(1) Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.** 2/249.

Ali from caliphate and give it to Abdullah ibn Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who hasn't participated in this incident, but Amr is your oldest friend. People say that he wants caliphate for himself and doesn't consider you more deserving than him."

The following issues were going to be under discussion and the judges were assigned to derive the command from the Quran and traditions**Error! Bookmark not defined.**:

1. The murder of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.
2. The legitimacy of the Imam's government.
3. Muʿawiyah's opposition to the legitimate government of the Imam (ʿa) and the basis of its authenticity.
4. How peace can be achieved.

Unfortunately, what the judges didn't talk about were these four specific issues as if they had never been on the agenda. Each one entered the scene of judgment only interested in the materialization of his personal opinions and desires. The prolonged residence of the judges at Dawmat al-Jandal increased fear and anxiety in the Islamic community. Every one thought about it in a different manner; the hasty and shallow in one manner and the farsighted and profound in another.

The discussion about the first issue should have centered on the general complaints about the third caliph; his courtiers should have been presented with relevant correct documents; then, the Iraqis, Egyptians, and companions who were accused of having their hand in his murder should have been called and the issue discussed in detail; and the claims of the killers that the caliph had trampled the Islamic principles under his feet and had deviated from the traditions of the Holy Prophet (s);**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and, even the methods of the previous two caliphs should have been investigated with neutrality and without any prejudice. But this matter wasn't taken seriously and Amr, to dismiss the Imam (ʿa) and place Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** or his own son Abdullah upon the seat of caliphate, asked Abu-Musa, "Was Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** killed as an oppressed?" He in a way testified and said, "The killers of the caliph made him repent and then killed him, whereas repentance releases from crime."

What wasn't discussed at all was the issue of the legitimacy of the government of the Imam (ʿa), the unanimously elected government that was imposed upon Imam Ali (ʿa),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** which he initially didn't accept until the great congregation of Helpers and

Emigrants insisted that they would not vote for anyone except him. If the caliphate of the first caliph, with the voting of a handful of people and caliphate of the second caliph on the sole nomination of Abu-Bakr could be legitimate, why not the caliphate of Imam Ali (ʿa) become legitimate and official with the allegiance of all Emigrants and Helpers except five people?

The third topic, like the second, was not discussed. Both judges knew that Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s opposition was only to remove the Imam (ʿa) from his legitimate position and occupy caliphate. The life of Muʿawiyah, his words and character before the murder of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and after it explicitly demonstrates that for a long time he was trying to establish an Umayyad government so that, in the name of Islam, he could revive the reigns of Caesar and Khosrow. If he considered himself the guardian of Uthman's blood, he would be required to accept the legitimate government of the Imam (ʿa) and then demand punishing the killers of Uthman from the caliph of the time.

The Imam (ʿa) **Error! Bookmark not defined.**repeatedly showed him the way to filing a legal and judicial claim against the people who opposed the caliph and reminded him that his first duty was to preserve the solidarity, respect the council of Emigrants and Helpers and then request retaliation. He wasn't eligible to raise this issue until he didn't accept the government officially.

Regarding the fourth matter, instead of condemning Muʿawiyah's rebellion against a government that was approved of by the council of Emigrants and Helpers or consider himself guilty because of his taking distance from the caliphate of the Imam (ʿa) in the earlier days, Abu-Musa considered the opponents as guilty because of wishing to appoint an individual whose only distinction was that he was the son of the second caliph and had remained away from this conflict.

Unfortunately, the foolish followers of the Imam (ʿa) imposed an unworthy representative upon him. Amr, from the first day of his entrance in Dawmat al-Jandal**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, respected Abu-Musa as the Prophet's companion and older than him and always insisted on him to speak before him. When both of them agreed on the dismissal of Ali and Muʿawiyah, Amr preferred him to be the first to announce his dismissal of his client. Abu-Musa thus declared the dismissal of Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and trampled upon all the recommendations that his friends had emphasized. Whereas Amr immediately appointed Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** as caliph!

The observers and others who were waiting for the opinion of the judges gathered to hear. At this juncture, Amr used the stupidity and simple-mindedness of Abu-Musa and asked him to open the proceedings of the assembly by announcing his opinion. Abu-Musa completely unaware that Amr might refuse to testify according to the agreement they had reached after his speech, started talking and said, "I and Amr reached an agreement about a matter and I hope that this would result in the prosperity and righteousness of Muslims."

Amr confirmed, "This is true. Continue your words."

At this moment, Ibn Abbas came to Abu-Musa and warned him, saying, "If you have agreed upon an issue, let Amr speak first and you may announce your opinion later on, because it is quite probable that he will change his mind after your announcement." Yet, Abu-Musa didn't pay any attention to this warning and said, "Leave me alone! We both have the same opinion about the issue of caliphate."

Then, he stood up and said, "We studied the situation of the community, and in order to remove differences and return to unity we didn't find any thing better than to dismiss Ali and Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** from caliphate and assign the task of selection of a caliph to the Council of Muslims so that they can appoint whomever they prefer as caliph. On this basis, I dismiss Ali and Muʿawiyah from caliphate."

Having said this sentence, he pulled himself back and sat down. Then, Amr reached the place from where Abu-Musa had announced his opinion earlier, praised and thanked God and added, "O people! You have heard the words of Abu-Musa; he has dismissed his leader and I agree with him in this matter and dismiss him from caliphate; but opposing him I reinstate Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** upon caliphate. He is the guardian of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s blood and the worthiest person."

Abu-Musa with intense wrath looked at Amr and said, "You would never achieve salvation because of your deceit and you are like *a dog; if you attack it, it pants with its tongue out, and if you leave it, it pants with its tongue out. Such is the likeness of people who deny Our revelations*."

Amr replied, *"Your situation is as the likeness of an ass carrying books."*

The deceit of Amr was exposed and the assembly lost its control. Shurayh arose and hit Amr's head with a lash. Amr's son rushed to help his father and hit Shurayh with a lash and people placed themselves between them. Shurayh later on said, "I am ashamed that instead of hitting his head with a

lash, I didn't hit his head with my sword."

Ibn Abbas said, "May God condemn Abu-Musa! I warned him in advance about Amr's deceit but he didn't pay attention."

Abu-Musa said, "It is true that Ibn Abbas warned me about the deceit of this lewd person, but I was confident and never thought that he would say anything bad about me."

Saʿid ibn Qays said to both of the judges, "Had you been united upon truthfulness, you would not have added anything to our conditions, what to say about uniting on deviation and abjectness. Your opinion isn't incumbent upon the Imam (ʿa) and today we are in the situation that we were in the past and will continue to fight against the rebels."

In this episode, Abu-Musa and al-Ashʿath were admonished the most. Abu-Musa continuously said bad things about Amr and the tongue of al-Ashʿath became dull and closed and wasn't able to speak anything. Ultimately, Amr and Muʿawiyah's supporters **Error! Bookmark not defined.**collected their belongings and left for Damascus, explained the incident in detail and saluted him with the title of caliph. Ibn Abbas and Shurayh returned to Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and explained the episode, but Abu-Musa, because of the mistake he had committed, took refuge in Mecca and lived there.

Ultimately, the Battle of Siffin**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and the farce of arbitration after the killing of thousands of Muslims in the month of Shaʿban, 38 A.H., ended, creating immense complexities for the government of Imam Ali (ʿa) and caliphate that were never resolved.

BATTLE OF AL-NAHRAWAN

The ominous and unmanly politics of Muʿawiyah and Amr resulted in painful and bitter catastrophes. He achieved the following objectives:

1. Domination on Syria was reinforced and all governors and other officials of that region sincerely accepted his obedience, renouncing any loyalty they had to Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

2. Imam Ali's**Error! Bookmark not defined.** return to square one wasn't an easy task, because the morale of his army was lowered significantly and all the zeal of seeking martyrdom was gone.

3. The army of Muʿawiyah was reorganized, committing looting and killing in order to weaken the morale of the Iraqi people and endanger the security of the region by showing the central government as weak and incapacitated.

4. The worst of all in the Iraqi army was their spilt into two groups; a group believed in the arbitration while the other group regarded it as infidelity. They demanded the Imam (ʿa) to repent; otherwise, they would end their allegiance and fight against him like they had done against Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

5. Under the shadow of this ideology, those who were actually its propagates and had forced the Imam (ʿa) to accept it left Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** as opponents of the present government and stationed themselves within two miles away from the vicinity of Kufa. It was too soon to forget the bitterness of the Battle of Siffin**Error! Bookmark not defined.** that the ominous Battle of Nahrawan took place and although this mutinous group was annihilated apparently, the remnants of this group committed seditions in isolated corners and places.

In this battle, the opponents were the Imam's past companions whose foreheads had black marks due to excessive prostration and the tones of their recital of the Holy Quran engulfed the surroundings. The battle with this group was more difficult than the previous two groups, but the Imam (ʿa) was completely disappointed after remaining patient for several months and dispatching influential personalities and witnessing their armed rebellion. There was no one to fight these apparently pious people except Imam Ali (ʿa).

These three groups have been mentioned in history as Renegades, Transgressors, and Apostates. The Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** foretold about these three groups with these very titles. He told Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** before the other companions that he would fight them. In this regard, Imam Ali is reported to have said, "The Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** had told me that I would fight the Renegades, the Transgressors, and the Apostates."(1)

Ibn Kathir, who died in year AH 774, collected a part of this tradition in his book on the history of Islam. He wrote that the Holy Prophet (s) entered the chamber of Ummu-Salamah, his wife, and he was followed by Ali. The Prophet (s) looked to his wife and said, "After my passing away, Ali will fight against the Renegades, the Transgressors, and the Apostates."

This Prophetic tradition is too authentic and uninterruptedly reported to be denied.

Al-Amini, a well-versed scholar,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** in his book *al-Ghadir*, collected part of this narration.

The history of the Apostates testifies that they always opposed the government of the time, neither accepted the ruler nor his government, and they did not differentiate between a just or unjust ruler like Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, and their behavior with Yazid, Marwan and Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Abd al-Aziz was exactly the same.

Roots of the Khawarij

During the Holy Prophet's lifetime,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** this group expressed their ideas and thoughts and said things that revealed their spirit of disobedience and rebellion:

The Holy Prophet (s) wisely distributed the spoils of the Battle of Hunayn to win over the hearts of polytheists recently converted to Islam by offering them a little more share. At that moment, Hurqus ibn Zurayr **Error! Bookmark not defined.**opened his mount in complaint and rudely said to the Prophet (s), "Be fair!" His impolite and rude talk enraged the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who said, "Woe upon you! If I am not fair, who else can be fair?" Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** suggested beheading the man, but the Prophet (s) didn't allow it

(1) Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, *Tarikh Baghdad* 2/340.

and foretold his dangerous future, saying, “Leave him! He will have followers showing excessive religiousness, like the shooting of an arrow from the bow, they will apostatize.”(1)

Al-Bukhari narrated this incident comprehensively, writing, “The Holy Prophet (s) said: They will apostatize from the religion as swiftly as an arrow leaves the bow.”(2)

The Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** used the Arabic verb *maraqa* which is used for shooting, because of their excessive bending and tilting in understanding the religion. They will reach a point where they remain away from the reality of religion and be titled as *Apostates*. Hurqus should have broken the seal of silence during the caliphate of the first and second caliphs and complained about the methods of their selection and traditions, but unfortunately history hasn’t written anything about it. Only Ibn al-Athir mentioned that in the victory of al-Ahwaz, Hurqus was appointed as the commander by Umar.

Al-Tabari narrated that in 35 A.H., Hurqus led a rebellion against the government of Uthman,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** entered Medina and united with the rebels from Egypt and Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

Another root of the *Khawarij* is Dhu’l-Thudayyah. Many narrators imagined that Hurqus who was famous as Dhu’l-Khuwaysirah was the same Dhu’l-Thudayyah, but the author of *al-Milal wa’l-Nihal* wrote, “The first one is Dhu’l-Khuwaysirah, while the last one is Dhu’l-Thudayyah.” Both of them were similar in style of complaint against the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** when he distributed the spoils of war and said, “Be fair!” yet, the Holy Prophet gave the same answer to both of them. It is presumed that both of them had the same name although history records nothing about Dhu’l-Khuwaysirah.

Ibn Kathir, collecting narrations about the Apostates, quoted the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** as saying, “A group will renounce the religion as swiftly as the shooting of an arrow and will never return. The mark of this group is that among them there is a man with a black face who had a defective hand with flesh like the breast of a

(1) Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah* 2/497.

(2) *Sahih al-Bukhari.*

woman."[1]

Imam Ali (ʿa),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** after resting from the Battle of Nahrawan, ordered locating the dead body of Dhu'l-Thudayyah to look at his defective hand. When they brought his body, they found his hand exactly in the same condition as was described by the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

The first opposition of the Apostates to the Imam (ʿa) was on the issue of arbitration, which they interpreted as against the Book of God. With the passage of time, this group developed itself into a school of thought and produced branches and new schools of thought all of which ceased to exist with the passage of time except for the faction of Abdullah ibn Abadah who rebelled at the end of the government of Marwan. The followers of this sect scattered in Oman, Persian Gulf and Algeria.

Al-Tabari, al-Mubarrad, al-Buladhari, and many other historians gathered the contents relevant to the Apostates and organized the events as historical quotations. Among the historians, Muslims and others, plenty of analytical books have been written including the following:

1. *Mulakhkhas Tarikh al-Khawarij* by Muhammad Sharif Salim.

2. *Al-Khawrij fi'l-Islam* by Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** al-Nasar.

3. *Waqʿat al-Nahrawan* by Khatib Hashimi.

4. *Al-Khawarij fi'l-Asr al-Amawi*, Dr. Nayif Mahmud.

Some Orientalists, too, wrote on this topic.

The word *khawarij* holds many meanings. In Arabic culture, it is used for a rebel against the government of the time and not recognizing it formally as legitimate and lawful. In the terminology of theology and historiography, *khawarij* are those who rebelled against Imam Ali after the farce of arbitration, raising the slogan: There is no command but God's.

The Imam (ʿa) thought that it would be prudent to leave the battlefield of Siffin after accepting the farce of arbitration, return to Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, and wait for the result of the arbitration. He faced the disappointment of his own army while entering Kufa; so, his self-sacrificing companions and he noticed that the soldiers whose number was twelve thousand refused to enter the city and as a protest against the

(1) Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah* 2/496.

acceptance of the arbitration went to a village named Harawra' and some others decided to reside at the garrison of al-Nukhaylah.

The Khawarij **Error! Bookmark not defined.**had pressured the Imam (ʿa) to accept the arbitration and even threatened to kill him, but after a while, realizing their mistake, considered it a sin, an offence and even polytheism and apostasy. They repented from it and demanded the Imam (ʿa) to confess of his sin, and repent, and continue war against Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** wasn't the type of person to circle around the sin, accept forbidden acts and consider the signed contract as unseen. He thus didn't pay any serious attention to their mischief and started an ordinary life, but the stubborn apostates in order to accomplish their ominous objectives held a private meeting with the Imam (ʿa) to convince him to break the contract, refused to attend the Friday Prayers, shouted harsh and rude slogans in the mosque against the Imam, accused him and all those who respected the contract of Siffin of heresy, killed celebrated personalities, created insecurity in Iraq, and rose with arms against the government of the Imam (ʿa).

In order to silence the sedition, the Imam (ʿa) took such steps like declaring that it was imposed on him to accept the farce of arbitration, replied to all their complaints through discussions, delivering the most meaningful and eloquent speeches, dispatched personalities like Ibn Abbas to enlighten their minds, promised that if they remained peaceful, even if they did not change their belief, they would not be discriminated with respect to other Muslims and he would not deprive them of their salaries from the public treasury, prosecuted the criminal apostates who had spilled the blood of Abdullah and his pregnant wife, and confronted their armed uprising and uprooted their corruption.

Fortunately, history has very comprehensively recorded all these events as follows: One day, two people from the Apostates arrived in the presence of the Imam (ʿa) and hot discussions were held between them. They said, "There is no command except God's," and the **Error! Bookmark not defined.**Imam (ʿa) answered, "I too say the same words." They then demanded, "You must repent from your sins, cancel your acceptance of the farce of arbitration, and dispatch us to fight against Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**."

The Imam answered, "I wanted to do that but you rebelled against me at Siffin and imposed the arbitration on me. Now, I have signed a contract

with them, accepted conditions, and given my assurance to them. God says: *Fulfill the covenant of God when ye have covenanted, break not your oaths after asserting them and after you make God surety over you. Lo! God knoweth what you do.* [16:91]'"

Hurqus said, "This was your sin that you should regret," but the Imam (ʿa) answered, "It wasn't a sin; rather, it was the incompetence of your opinion and weakness of your efforts; and I warned you and tried to prevent you from this task." The other man, Dharih, said, "By God, if you don't renounce, we will fight against you for the sake of God."

These words angered the Imam (ʿa) who said, "O unfortunate ones! What bad persons you are! I see coming that wind will blow on your dead body covered with dust." He answered indifferently, "I like it to be that way." The Imam (ʿa) warned, "Satan has hijacked your reason. Fear God's punishment and know that you will gain nothing from fighting me."

Then, both of them left the Imam's presence shouting, "There is no command except God's."***Error! Bookmark not defined.***

Although it is highly recommended in Islam to participate in the congregational prayers and it is not a sin to shun doing so, in the beginning of Islam continuous absence from it was regarded as protest against the government, sedition and hypocrisy; therefore, participation in the congregational Friday Prayers was emphasized in narrations.

The Apostates, though present in the mosque, did not participate in the congregational prayers, thus expressing their opposition. They even shouted heated slogans. One day, the Imam (ʿa) was standing in the prayer when Ibn al-Kawwa, a chief of the Apostates, recited this Quranic verse: *And verily it hath been revealed unto thee as unto those before thee (saying): if thou ascribe a partner to God, thy work will fail and thou indeed wilt be among the losers.* [39:65]

Imam Ali (ʿa) with perfect dignity answered with this Quranic verse: *And when the Quran is recited, give ear to it and pay heed, that you may obtain mercy.* [7:204]

Ibn al-Kawwa repeated this verse several times and the Imam (ʿa), with perfect dignity and patience, preferred silence. Ultimately, the Imam (ʿa) replied to him in a way that his prayer wasn't interrupted and ibn al-Kawwa was silenced: *So, have patience! God's promise is the very truth*

and let not those who have no certainty make thee impatient. [30:60][1]

Ibn al-Kawwa intended to accuse the primmest believer after the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** of polytheism because he had accepted other than God as partner in the issue of arbitration.

The Apostates repeatedly came to the mosque and cried the slogan: There is no command except God's.**Error! Bookmark not defined.** This slogan is quoted from Quranic verses that read:

The decision is for God only. He telleth the truth and He is the best of deciders. [6:57]

Surely, His is the judgment. He is the swiftest of reckoners. [6:62]

The decision rests with God only, Who has recommended that ye worship none save Him. [12:40]

Lo! The decision rests with God only. In Him I put my trust and in Him all the trusting put their trust. [12:67]

His is the praise, all praise in the former and the latter (state), He is the command and unto Him ye will be brought back. [28:70]

But when some partner was ascribed to Him, ye were believing. But the command belongeth only to God, the Sublime and the Majestic. [40:12]

According to the Quranic texts, command is only God's and it is a sort of polytheism to adopt the command of anyone else. Yet, another Quranic verse reads: *And verily We gave the children of Israel, the scripture, the command and prophethood*. [45:16]

At another place, Prophet David ('a) is ordered to judge between people with truth: *Judge aright between mankind and follow not desire*. [38:26]

It is extremely painful that the Imam ('a) was encountered with a fist of ignorant and foolish people who presented that exoteric essence of the verses as their excuse and endeavored to make the community confused and misguided. This group of apostates had memorized the verses of the Holy *Quran*, but according to the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, "The Quran didn't go farther than their throats and chests and never entered the environment of reflection."

They did not realize that the Imam ('a) was the real interpreter of the Holy Quran; he learnt that directly from the Prophet (s) and he was the only one

(1) Tarikh al-Tabari 4/54; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah.

to rightly guide to the real and esoteric meanings of the Quranic verses and to explain the actual meaning of *command*. In this Holy Quran, this word (*hukm*) was used to express the following meanings:

1. Creation of the universe and implementation of God's will. [12:67]

2. Enactment of laws. [6:57]

3. Ruling over people with justice. [12:40]

4. Issuing judicial verdicts concerning people's disputes. [5:49]

5. Guardianship over people. [45:16]

It is thus a term that has miscellaneous meanings; therefore, it is unreasonable to restrict it to one meaning only, especially when that meaning is the apparent but not the actual and it is baseless to consider the issue of arbitration to be against the Holy Quran.

First of all, it should be found out which command belongs only to God and then the Imam's deed should be compared with the Holy Quran. The Imam ('a), with immense patience and self-control, taught them the meanings and objectives of these verses and refuted their arguments, but stubbornness is incurable malady. Before the analysis of the meanings of the verses, we would like to describe some of the hot and rude encounters of the Apostates so that the stubbornness and self-centeredness of this radical group can be clearly visible.

Any ruler would have taken swift action against these rude, stubborn and impolite people who accuse the leader of infidelity and polytheism, but Imam Ali ('a), unlike most rulers, encountered them with perfect politeness and broad-mindedness. One day, he was advising people from the pulpit when suddenly one of the Apostates shouted the slogan. When he finished, another one arose and repeated the same slogan and later on a group arose and shouted that slogan jointly. The Imam ('a) explained to the gathering, "Apparently, this is a true word intended for falsity." He then addressed the Apostates, "Until you are with me, your impudence will not deprive you of these rights: You won't be prevented of entering the mosques to offer prayers, you won't be deprived of your salaries from the public treasury as long as you are part of the Muslim community, and I will not fight you before you start fighting"

On another day, when Imam Ali ('a)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was busy speaking in the mosque, one of the Khawarij cried the slogan to attract the attentions of people to him. The Imam ('a) said, "This is a true

word intended for falsity. If they remain silent, I will treat them like others; if they want to speak, I will reply to them; and if they rebel, I will fight them."

Then, another one of them stood up and said, "I take refuge in God from accepting wretchedness in the code of God. Such a task is a deceit in the act of God and is abjectness that will bring about God's punishment. Ali, do you want to scare us with death?"

The Imam (ʿa) did not reply; rather, he sat down waiting for the forthcoming incidents.

The rebellion of a part of the Imam's troops who were regarded as his powerful and steadfast arms resulted in making the situation more difficult. This rebellion took place twice: once in Siffin where the rebels demanded the Imam (ʿa) to stop the war and accept the arbitration or to be killed, and the second time after the acceptance of the arbitration. The same group wanted something completely opposite to the earlier demand. This time, they wanted Imam Ali (ʿa) to declare the signed treaty as null and void.

The first demand destroyed the victory of the Imam (ʿa) when his simple-minded soldiers weren't ready to fight although they were ready to kill him. To agree to peace, under the circumstances, couldn't be regarded as illegal or against the principles and intellectual regulations. The Imam (ʿa) clearly told them that the acceptance of arbitration was imposed on him by them due to their imprudent action. As for their second demand, it was clearly opposed to the command of the Holy Quran that commands all to respect their contracts and commitments.

In this condition, the Imam (ʿa) had no alternative but to maintain order, show steadfastness, advise and guide the deceived people. First, he attempted to guide them, but this did not work; so, he tried dispatching his intellectual and wise companions to them to guide them to the truth.

The Imam (ʿa) ordered Ibn Abbas to visit the garrison of the Apostates and hold discussions which them. Ibn Abbas asked them, "What are your reasons for complaint against the Commander of the Faithful?" They answered, "He was the Commander of the Faithful but when he gave his hand for the arbitration, he became an infidel. He should admit it first then repent so that we can join him." Ibn Abbas said, "It is not for a believer to admit infidelity as long as no doubt affected his faith." They answered, "The reason of his infidelity is that he gave his hand for the arbitration."

Ibn Abbas remarked, "The acceptance of arbitration is a command that God has mentioned at many places in the Quran: '*O ye believe! Kill no wild game while ye are on the pilgrimage. Whoso of you killeth it of set purpose he shall pay its forfeit in the equivalent of that which he hath killed, of domestic animals, the judge to be two men among you known for justice*.' In such an easy issue, God has issued commands to judge. Is it not permissible to judge in an issue related to the affairs of Muslims?"

They answered, "The judges have issued a judgment about him, but he hasn't accepted it." Ibn Abbas explained, "The position of a judge is not higher than the position of leadership. Whenever a leader of Muslims takes a path opposite to Muslims, the community should rise against him; what to say about the judgment of a judge which is issued against the truth?"

When the Apostates realized their mistake, they stubbornly criticized Ibn Abbas and said, "You are one of those people about whom God said, '*Nay! But they are a contentious folk*. [43:58]' He also said, '*Warn therewith the forward folk*. [19:97]'"(1)

Had they been truth-seekers, their hearts wouldn't have been blackened by misinterpretations of the Quran; they would have appreciated the logic of Ibn Abbas, put down their arms and rejoined the Imam (ʿa). They should have fought the real enemy, but unfortunately they recited the verses that were meant for the polytheists of Quraysh and not for the believers. Judging is a command that the Holy Quran proposed even in smaller disputes and described its result if the intentions of the opponents are good and righteous. He says: *If ye fear a breach between them twain (the man and wife), appoint an arbitrator from his folks and an arbitrator form her folks. If they desire amendment, God will make them of one mind. Lo! God is ever Knower and Aware*. [4:35]

If the community following the Book and traditions, after a crushing war of three months, requests the judgment of two arbitrators, they haven't committed an offence that made them infidels requiring repentance.

Ibn Abbas engaged in discussions with them again and again to guide them, and the Imam (ʿa) had instructed him to debate with them through Prophetic traditions, because the verses of Quran explain things within the bounds of various probabilities, while the Apostates selected the probability that suited their attitude. He said, "Don't debate with the Khawarij using Quranic verses, because its verses have the capacity to meet

(1) Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* 2/273, quoted from al-Mubarrad's *al-Kamil* 3/582.

various probabilities and in this case you will say one thing and they say another; but debate with them through Prophetic traditions so that they will not have any option except to agree with your argument."

The efforts of such personalities like Saʿsaʿah ibn Sawhan, Ziyad ibn Nasr, and Ibn Abbas were fruitless; therefore, the Imam decided to encounter the Apostates personally and prevent them from rebelling. Before leaving, he asked Saʿsaʿah about their leaders, and he referred to Yahya ibn Qays. So, the Imam rode on his horse and stopped at Yahya's tent. He offered a two-unit prayer and then started his words, "Were all of you present at Siffin?" "No," the answered; so, the Imam asked them to separate into two groups so that he would speak with each group according to their capacity. With a loud voice, he said, "Be silent, don't make a noise, listen to my words, and make your hearts attentive to me. If I ask you to bear witness, testify with respect to your knowledge."

He then praised God and made all of them attentive to Him. He said, "This is the place where the victorious will be victorious on the Day of Resurrection and the condemned will be blind and misguided. Didn't you say, at the time the Quran was raised on spearheads with deceit and trickery, that they were your brethren-in-faith but they renounced their past deeds disgracefully and taken refuge in the Book of God; therefore, you should accept their opinion and relieve them from this sorrow? Yet, I said that their act was outwardly expressing faith but inwardly expressing enmity and grudge. Its beginning is blessing and charming for hearts but its end is shame and regret. Stay upon your task, don't leave your path, press your teeth to fight your enemy, don't pay attention to these calls because they will misguide you. Ultimately, this surrender to their demand was done against my strict instructions and I saw that you provided such an opportunity to the enemy."(1)

The Khawarij replied, "You have said the truth, but we had committed a great sin from which we then repented; therefore, you should repent, too." The Imam (ʿa), without pointing to any specific sin, said, "I repent to God from all sins." At this moment, six thousand people left the garrison and joined the Imam.

Ibn Abi'l-Hadid commented, "The repentance of the Imam (ʿa) was a sort of dissimulation and was like a war tactic. He spoke a word that had been said by all messengers and the enemy too agreed upon it, without the Imam (ʿa)

(1) *Ibid.* 2/280.

having admitted any sin."[1]

After the Apostates returned from the garrison of Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, it was circulated among people that the Imam (ʿa) had refused to accept the judgment and considered it deviation and degradation and he was planning to procure resources to fight Muʿawiyah before the announcement of the judgment. Al-Ashʿath ibn Qays said, "People are saying that the Commander of the Faithful has broken the contract, considering the issue of arbitration as infidelity and misguidance."

The words of al-Ashʿath placed the Imam (ʿa) in a situation where he was helpless except to explain the reality; so, he said, "Whoever says that I have revoked the contract is lying; whoever imagines it as misguidance is misguided." This expression of reality was so intolerable for the Apostates who immediately shouted their slogan, left the mosque, and returned to their garrison. Here, Ibn Abi'l-Hadid mentioned that any sort of disturbance in the government of the Imam (ʿa) was linked directly to al-Ashʿath, because if he hadn't raised this issue, the Imam (ʿa) wouldn't have been forced to explain the reality explicitly, and the Apostates who were contented with his over-all repentance would have rushed in his presence to fight Muʿawiyah.

Al-Mubarrad quotes another debate of the Imam (ʿa) with the Apostates that is completely different from the first one and it is probable that it is a second debate:

The Imam (ʿa) said to them, "Do you remember that they raised copies of the Quran on spearheads and I said that this act is deceit and fraud and if they really were interested in the judgment of the Quran, they could have come near me and asked for judgment? Do you know any one else who considers the arbitration asked by those two individuals as bad and shameful as I do?"

The Khawarij answered in the negative; so, the Imam (ʿa) said, "Do you testify that with my total reluctance and hesitation, you imposed this task on me and I, because of helplessness, responded to your demand and made it as conditional that the command of the judges would only be valid if they judge in accordance with God's command? All of you are aware that God's command doesn't transgress over me since I am the true leader and the caliph appointed by the Emigrants and Helpers."

Ibn al-Kawwa said, "It is true that because of our intense pressure you

(1) *Ibid*.

made those two persons as judges in God's religion, but we admit that with this act we became infidels and right now offer our repentance and, likewise, you should admit your infidelity and repent; then you may dispatch all of us to fight Muʿawiyah."

The Imam (ʿa) asked, , "Do you know that in case of differences between a husband and wife, God has commanded to refer to two judges where He said: *Appoint an arbitrator from his folks and an arbitrator from her folks*? Also, in determining the atonement for the killing of hunters in the pilgrim's garb God commanded to refer to two just people as judges: *The judges should be two men among you known for justice*."

Ibn al-Kawwa said, "You have erased the title: *Commander of the Faithful* from your name and, by doing so, dismissed yourself from the government."

The Imam (ʿa) explained, "The Prophet (s) is our model; at al-Hudaybiyah when the truce between the Prophet (s) and the polytheists of Quraysh was decided to be written, the representative of the Quraysh complained, 'If I admit your prophethood, I can't fight you; you must remove your title as prophet of God.' The Prophet asked me, 'Ali! Erase the title: Prophet of God, from my name.' I said, 'O Prophet of God, my heart doesn't allow me to do so;' the Prophet erased it with his own hand and smiled a little and said: You too will encounter the same situation."

These words made two thousand people assembled at Harawra' return to the obedience to the Imam; they are known as Haruriyyah.

The policy of the Imam (ʿa) concerning the Apostates was that until they did not shed blood and start looting wealth, they could live freely in Kufa and its surroundings even though they shouted slogans of rebellion and raised a hue and cry against him. The Imam (ʿa) dispatched Ibn Abbas one more time to Harawra' to ask them, "What do you want?" They replied, "All those who participated in the Battle of Siffin and accepted the arbitration should leave Kufa, and all of us should move to Siffin, stay over there for three nights offering repentance, and enter Syria to fight Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**!"

The stubbornness of the Apostates is clearly visible. If the arbitration was an offence or sin, it was not required to offer repentance exactly at the same place where it had been committed, with the additional condition of staying there for three consecutive nights! Real repentance came with the moment of being truly ashamed and by reciting the specific sentence of repentance. The Imam (ʿa) said, "Why do you say these words when two judges have already been dispatched and the opponents have promised

commitment to each other?

They replied, “At that time, the war took too long time, hardships and pressure increased, the number of casualties raised, and we lost a lot of our arms and animals. Due to these reasons, we accepted the arbitration.” The Imam (ʿa) asked, “Did you accept it on a day because the pressure had increased? The Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** respected his treaty with the polytheist, but you are now asking me to break my commitment.”

The Apostates felt ashamed in their hearts but because of the prejudice of their belief they started shouting, “There is no command except God’s even if the polytheists have reluctance.” One day, one of them entered the mosque and shouted the slogan. People surrounded him but he kept repeating his slogan and cried, “There is no Command except God’s even if Abu’l-Hasan is hesitant.” The Imam (ʿa) replied, “I don’t disapprove the government of God, but I am waiting for God’s command about you.” People asked the Imam (ʿa), “Why have you given them all that time and not uprooted them?” and he replied, “They will not be destroyed; a group among them, in the back of their fathers and in the ovaries of their mothers, shall remain in the same condition until the Resurrection Day.”(1)

(1) Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.** 2/310-1.

ANALYSIS OF THE KHAWARIJ'S OPPOSITION

The Khawarij's opposition to Imam Ali (ʿa) was completely different from Muʿawiyah's. Since Umar's reign**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** had prepared grounds to declare Syria as an autonomous province and himself as its absolute ruler. After the murder of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** when he found out that the Imam (ʿa) wanted to remove him from that position, he opposed him by first motivating Talhah and al-Zubayr and after their defeat, initiating the Battle of Siffin.**Error! Bookmark not defined.** His ominous act of raising copies of the Quran on spearheads created a profound spilt among the companions of the Imam (ʿa) and ultimately the Imam (ʿa) was sacrificed by this ominous division.

The Khawarij, on the other hand, opposed the Imam (ʿa) because of their ignorance and superficial knowledge of Islam. For a nonsensical reason, they stood against the divine light of guidance and paid the heavy price of complete annihilation. Because of this clear distinction between Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and the Khawarij, the Imam (ʿa) said, "Don't fight with the Khawarij after me, because one who seeks the truth but misses it is not like one who seeks falsity and finds it."(1)

The Khawarij did not seek offices and wealth; rather, a sort of crookedness and deprived thinking ruled over them. They continuously complained that it was not possible for two individuals from two opposite camps to take over the destiny of Muslims and impose their opinion on the officially recognized leader of Muslims. Religion and the destiny of Muslims were far above individuals who with defective reasons should not have authority. They said that Imam Ali allowed individuals to act as judges regarding God's religion. This complaint indicates that they did not know about the conditions of acceptance of the verdict of judges and assumed that the Imam (ʿa) had left the destiny of the community in the hands of those two persons. Replying to their complaint, the Imam (ʿa) said, "I have not appointed individuals as judges but made the Quran a judge among us. Since the Quran is written between two binders, it doesn't speak and therefore one should speak on its behalf. Individuals are appointed to voice its commands. When the Syrian people asked us to place the Quran as a judge between us, we weren't the group to turn our faces away from the

(1) *Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.**, sermon 58.

Book of God, because God has said: '*If you have a conflict about an issue, refer to God and his Prophet*.' Reference to God means to judge with His Book and reference to the Prophet (s) is to uphold his tradition. Whenever the judges issue their judgment in accordance with the Book of God, we are the worthiest to take it, and if they judge in accordance with the traditions of the Prophet (s), we are still the worthiest to follow it."(1)

The Imam ('a) gave the same reply in another sermon: "The judges have been selected to make alive whatever the Quran has made alive and abolish whatever it has dismissed. Reviving the Quran means gathering around it; while annihilating it means to take distance from it. If the Quran guides us to the Syrians, we must follow; and if it guides them to us, they must follow. I didn't bring any evil to you, cheated you, or made you doubtful."(2)

Their second complaint was why the time of arbitration was fixed until the end of the month of Ramadan and a neutral location was selected for the judges to announce their judgment**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. This task should have been completed on the same day of raising the copies of the Quran on spearheads on the plain of Siffin.

Replying to this, the Imam ('a) said, "I have fixed a time schedule between you and them and didn't rush to finish the task of judgment soon. I did this task so that the ignorant individuals should become aware and the learned ones should remain steadfast."

All along the duration of opposition to the Imam ('a), the Khawarij repeated the Quranic verse: *"There is no command except God's"* and declared his act as explicitly opposed to the verdict of the Quran, saying, "Judgment is only from God; it is neither from you nor from your companions." The meaning of this Quranic verse is considered the principle of monotheism; it indicates that judgment and ruling, as a fundamental and basic right, is issued by God only, and no individual has this right over another individual. But this exclusive right to judgment doesn't contradict a group from ruling the world with God's permission and reflect His judgment. No intelligent person can claim that social life is possible without a government, since solving conflicts and disputes is possible only under the shadow of a government.

When Imam Ali ('a) heard their slogans, he commented, "It is true that the right to ruling is from God and no individual has the right to rule without

(1) *Ibid.* sermon 121.

(2) *Ibid.* sermons 17 and 123.

His permission, but the Khawarij with their slogans have another aim. They don't want any government in the society. For people, the existence of a ruler, whether good or evil, is absolutely necessary so that, in the shadow of his government, a believer can perform his righteous deeds and an infidel should enjoy material life."(1)

The absence of a government means lack of security wherein neither a believer would be able to practice virtue nor an infidel can enjoy his worldly life. If negation of a government is their aim, then how will they justify the government of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and the first two caliphs?

The Khawarij were consistently contradicting themselves in their belief and deeds. Although they knew that social life without a manager wasn't possible, they considered the establishment of any sort of government, except that of God, to be invalid. Nevertheless, they appointed a chief for their own party.

Al-Tabri wrote, "In the month of Shawwal, 38 A.H, a group of Khawarij assembled in the home of Abdullah ibn Wahab who spoke, 'It isn't appropriate that a group believes in God, obeys the command of the Quran while the worldly life in their sight should be more charming than encouraging good and forbidding evil.' After that, Hurqus and Hamzah ibn Sinan spoke and the third one at the end of speech said, 'So, you must surrender your affairs to a competent person to act as a pillar, support, and banner around which you can gather and be guided.'

Arbitration; the last hope

Amr was busy trying to hijack his rival's reason to somehow get his signature on the dismissal of the Imam ('a) and put his own signature on Mu'awiyah's leadership, while Abu-Musa was planning to give caliphate to his co-thinker Abdullah ibn Umar, under the pretext that this person was not involved in shedding the blood of Muslims**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. When the decision of the arbitration was announced, Imam Ali ('a) didn't accept it officially; he said that the arbitrators had acted opposite to their commitment and decided to organize an army, but the incident of the Khawarij prevented him from that.

The Imam ('a) was always soft and flexible while confronting the Khawarij he addressed them only to befriend and guide like a kind and

(1) *Ibid*. sermon 40.

compassionate father to his disinherited and rebellious son. All his efforts were concentrated on bringing them back to the path of guidance and thus ensuring the stability and solidarity of the society and then uprooting the cancerous tumor of Syria that had made the Khawarij a by-product of that sedition. The result of the arbitration gave this right to the Imam (ʿa) that if the arbitrators issued their verdict against the Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, the Imam (ʿa) would remain upon his previous position.

He thus delivered several speeches to enlighten the people that resumption of fighting against Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** wasn't against the treaty of Siffin and that fighting should be renewed to crush the enemy. In one of his speeches, he said, "My condition with them was to judge with justice and act according to the truth, and both of them accepted my conditions before issuing their tyrannical verdict. They opposed the path of truth and gave a verdict based on falsehood. My argument is sufficient and in order to silence this sedition we should prepare ourselves for fight."(1)

In the mind of the Imam (ʿa) and his companions, there was no issue greater than uprooting and removing this cancerous tumor and all their efforts were concentrated on this crucial task. Suddenly, the page of history turned over and the events made**Error! Bookmark not defined.** war with the Khawarij absolutely certain. Now let us see what caused the Imam's patience to wear out and firmly decide to fight a war against them.

1. It was reported that the Khawarij had assembled in the house of Abdullah ibn Wahab and decided on an armed uprising, requesting their sympathizers in Basra to rush to their garrison near al-Nahrawan and they had also announced their readiness.

2. The arbitration with extreme shamelessness decided dismissing the Imam (ʿa) from his position and appointing Muʿawiyah in his place. The Imam (ʿa) decided to enlighten the public about this matter. He said, "Opposing an aware well-wisher brings shame and regret. I had already rejected the judgment of these two people but you didn't pay attention to my advice; rather, you accepted their judgment. They opposed their commitment, revived what the Quran had annihilated, annihilated what it had revived, followed their carnal desires, and, without any proof, issued their verdict. Therefore, God, the Prophet (s) and believers stand

(1) *Nahj al-Balaghah*, Sermon 172.

exonerated from both judges. Prepare for fight and on Monday assemble in the garrison of al-Nukhaylah. By God, I will fight this group even though no one except me is present in the battlefield."

3. The Imam (ʿa) decided to leave Kufa for Siffin. Some of his companions suggested that the Khawarij should be invited to fight; so, he wrote letters to their chiefs: "Abu-Musa and Amr opposed the Book of God and followed their whimsical desires, neither acting upon the traditions nor upon the Quran. God, the Prophet (s), and the believers are exonerated from their deeds. When my letter reaches you, rush to me so that we should move to fight our common enemy."

4. The Imam's letter brought a negative reply from the Khawarij; therefore, he decided not to sit in waiting for them. He gather his soldiers and went to Siffin. He wrote a letter to Ibn Abbas, the governor of Basra, requesting his help. When the letter reached him, he read it to the people, but except for one thousand and five hundred under the command of al-Ahnaf ibn Qays, nobody announced readiness to join the Imam (ʿa). Ibn Abbas was very sad due to the very small number of volunteers and delivered a speech to a huge congregation, "This letter of the Commander of the Faithful has reached me and he has requested me to dispatch a group of fighters to him. I have already issued the order for participation, but only one thousand and five hundred people have declared their readiness for the fight, while in the government's records the names of sixty thousand people are recorded. As soon as possible, rush towards him, be pious and don't create superficial excuses. Whoever opposes the Imam's invitation will encounter severe shame. I have ordered Abu'l-Aswad to arrange the plan of your movement."

With all of the efforts made by Abu'l-Aswad and others, only one thousand and eight hundred were able to join the first group and ultimately a group of three thousand and two hundred people went to Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. The Imam (ʿa) was disappointed on seeing such a small number; so, he stood up among the people of Kufa and said, "O people of Kufa,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** you are my brothers and companions in the task of truth. With your help, I can crush the one who turns his back from the truth. I hope that you will guard the truth with steadfastness. Know that from Basra only three thousands and two hundred people have come to me. It is up to you to help me without any dearth and fainting and write to the chiefs of your tribes and your families and ask those who have the capacity to fight to participate in this war."

People like Saʿd ibn Qays, Adi ibn Hatam, Hujr ibn Adi and elders of the tribes obeyed and wrote letters to their tribes and in this manner forty thousands soldiers, seven thousand youths and eight thousand servants entered Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and the army of Basra joined with them and ultimately, the magnificent army assembled under the banner of Imam Ali (ʿa).

At his moment, some groups insisted that before fighting with Muʿawiyah, they should finish the task of the Khawarij. The Imam (ʿa) didn't pay any attention to their proposal and said, "Leave them alone, and let us go to the group of oppressors." At that moment, cries were raised, "Wherever you think it is prudent, lead us to that point because our hearts, like a single heart, are beating for your help and victory."

5. At such a sensitive moment, a report came that the Khawarij had beheaded Abdullah ibn Khabbab near the canal like a sheep, killed his pregnant wife and beheaded the fetus after taking it out from her womb.

When the Khawarij encountered Abdullah, they asked him who he was, and he answered, "I am a slave of and believer in God." "What is your opinion about Ali?" they said and he answered, "He is the commander of the faithful and the primmest believer in God and His prophet." They asked, "What is your name?" and he replied, "I am Abdullah ibn Khabbab ibn al-Aratt." They asked, "Your father is the same companion of the Prophet. Is he not?" "Yes," he answered. "Have we saddened you?" they asked and he answered in the affirmative. They then said, "Narrate for us a tradition that you heard from your father and he heard it from the Prophet." Abdullah said, "My father narrated that the Holy Prophet (s) said: After me, sedition will start in which the heart of a believer dies; at night, he sleeps as believer but in day, he may be infidel." Expressing their real intention, they said, "Our aim was to hear this narration from you. We swear that we will kill you in a manner before which no one has been killed." They tied his hands and feet and, together with his pregnant wife, brought him under a palm tree. At this moment, a date fell from the tree and one of the Khawarij put it in his mouth. Suddenly, complaints from his companions were raised as to why he was utilizing people's wealth without their permission. He took that date out of his mouth and threw it away! Also, a pig passing by, which belonged to a Christian. They shot it with an arrow to death. Criticism was raised that this was a mischievous act and they sought the contentment of its owner. Then they brought Abdullah who was tied near the canal and beheaded him like a sheep and didn't stop at that point, but they killed his wife and after cutting her womb, they took out the fetus and beheaded it

too. They also killed three other women one of whom was a companion's wife."[1]

Khabbab ibn al-Aratt, Abdullah's father, was one of the foremost Muslims and the scars of torture by the infidels could be seen upon his body until his death. He died in Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** before the return of the Imam (ʿa) from Siffin and the Imam (ʿa) went to his grave and praised him and invoked God's blessing on him.[2]

6. Imam Ali (ʿa) learned about Abdullah's murder; so, he dispatched al-Harith ibn Murrah to the garrison of the Khawarij to bring the correct information. When he entered their assembly in order to find out the correct details of the incident, they killed him against all Islamic and human principles. The murder of his ambassador increased the Imam's sorrow a lot. At that moment, a group arrived in his presence and said, "Is it prudent that with the existence of such a danger existing behind our backs we should go to Syria leaving our wives and children among them?"

The intense fear and anxiety that was created among people after Abdullah's murder forced the Imam (ʿa) to uproot them. He decided to move to Harawra', or al-Nahrawan. One of his companions, famous for astrology, prevented Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** from moving at that time and said, "If you move at this moment, you will be inflicted with heavy loss." The Imam (ʿa) didn't pay any attention to him and criticized him, saying, "Astrology as a guide should be utilized during dark nights in plains and oceans."

Incidentally, the Imam (ʿa) achieved victory most easily in this battle. He had moved only a small distance from Kufa when one of his companions ran to him and said, "O Commander of the Faithful! Congratulations! The group of Khawarij became aware about your movement and fled crossing the canal."

The Imam (ʿa) asked, "Did you see with your eyes that they had crossed the canal?" He replied, "Yes." The Imam (ʿa) asked him to swear three times, and he took the oath three times, and every time he said that he had seen them crossing the canal. Yet, the Imam (ʿa) said, "I swear by God that they haven't crossed the water and will never be able to cross it; they will be slain near water. By God Who split the seed and created human beings,

(1) *Ibid. page* 136.

(2) Al-Mubarrad, *al-Kamil*, page 162; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.** 2/282.

they will not even reach these areas."

The other two persons testified the words of this person but the Imam (ʿa) didn't accept their words. At this moment, a young man was filled with doubt whether he should accept the words of the eyewitness or the reports of the Imam from the Unseen. He decided that if the words of the Imam (ʿa) proved wrong, he would join his enemies. The Imam (ʿa) rode on his horse and the army moved following him. When they arrived at their garrison, it was seen that that they had broken the sheaths of their swords, freed their horses and all of them were ready for the combat. At that moment, that simple-minded youth came to the Imam (ʿa) and offered an apology about his intention. History mentions that the Imam (ʿa) passed through al-Mada'in, resided at al-Nahrawan and sent them a message to hand over the killers of Abdullah, his wife and child so that they would be retaliated. The Khawarij replied, "All of us killed him, since it is permissible for us to do so." The Imam (ʿa) came to them and said, "O rebellious group! I warn you lest you be cursed tomorrow by the community and be killed near the shore. I had warned you against accepting the arbitration and told you that the Umayyads neither had religion nor wanted the Quran. I had identified them very well since they were children, and do so now when they have become grown-ups. They are the worst children and worst adults. But you didn't pay attention to my words and you opposed me; because of such a day, I got a commitment from both the judges that whatever the Quran had made alive should be revived by them and whatever the Quran had annihilated should be destroyed. They have judged against both; so, I still remain upon my first word, path and method."

They remained blind to reason and insisted, "Through acceptance of the arbitration, all of them became infidels and we have repented. You too should confess of your sin and repent. In that case, we are with you; otherwise, leave us and if you have the intention to fight, we are also ready for fighting."

The Imam (ʿa) said, "Should I testify my infidelity after belief and fighting in defense of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**? Is acceptance of the arbitration the reason that you have hung your swords upon your shoulders and brought them down upon the heads of people and spilled their blood? This is your explicit loss."

The Imam (ʿa) ultimately ended the useless discussion and started organizing his army. Hujr ibn Adi and Shabath ibn Rabʿi were appointed as commanders of the right and left wings of the army respectively, and Abu-

Ayyub and Abu-Qutadah as the commanders of the cavalry and infantry soldiers respectively. In this battle, eight hundred Companions were present in the line of the Imam (ʿa) who appointed Qays ibn Saʿd as the commander and positioned him in the center of the army. Then, in the middle of the cavalry, he raised the standard and ordered Abu-Ayyub to loudly announce that the path of return was open; the repentance of those who want to assemble around this banner would be accepted, and any one who entered Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** or separate himself from this group would be immune and pardoned.

"We don't insist on spilling your blood," a group assembled around the standard and the Imam (ʿa) accepted their repentance. Thus, according to some narrations, one thousand people from the Khawarij selected the path of return and assembled around the standard, including some chiefs. In reality, except Abdullah ibn Wahab, no famous person remained with them. Al-Tabari wrote that after the return of this group to the Imam (ʿa), the army of the Khawarij consisted of two thousand and eight hundred people, while Ibn al-Athir mentioned their number as one thousand and eight hundred. The Imam (ʿa) ordered his companions not to start the fighting until the enemy attacked them. At this moment, a man came out, attacked the Imam's companions, and killed three people. Then, the Imam (ʿa) started the battle with his own attack and first killed that person, then he ordered his companions to attack, saying, "By God, no more than ten people will be killed from your group and except for ten people from them, no on else will survive."***Error! Bookmark not defined.***

At this moment, Abdullah ibn Wahab came to the battlefield and said, "O son of Abu-Talib! I am not leaving until I kill you or get killed." The Imam (ʿa) said, "May God kill him! How shameful this man is! He knows that I love swords and spears. He has been disappointed with his life and is looking at me with false greed." Then, with one stroke, the Imam killed him.

In a few hours of fight, the Imam (ʿa) was blessed with victory. His warriors fiercely attacked the enemy from right and left and he attacked from the center; and it was not long that the dead bodies of the Khawarij were lying upon the dust. In this battle, all of them were killed except nine people who escaped alive; two people took refuge in Khorasan, two in Oman, two in the island of Iraq and one in another place where they gave birth to their children and thus the lineage of the Khawarij continued. When the fighting ended, the Imam (ʿa) stood in front of their bodies and said sadly, "Misfortune upon you! The one who misguided you inflicted upon you a

terrible loss." His companions asked, "Who deceived them?" and he replied, "Satan and their rebellious selves did. He deceived them with desires, opened the path of mutiny for them, promised victory to them, and ultimately threw them into Hellfire."

The companions of the Imam (ʿa) imagined that the roots of the Khawarij had been cut off, but the Imam (ʿa) said, "No, it is not so. They still exist in the loins of men and wombs of women. Whenever a chief appears from among them, he will be cut down till the last of them will turn thieves and robbers."(1)

He then added, "Do not fight the Khawarij after me, because one who seeks right but does not find it is not like one who seeks wrong and finds it. Remember that your real enemy is Muʿawiyah.**Error! Bookmark not defined.** I took this action for the sake of maintaining security. A minority among them is left that isn't worth fighting."

The Imam (ʿa) distributed the spoils of war, arms and animals among his companions and handed over their household goods, slaves and maids to their inheritors. Then, he stood amidst his army and thanked them for their task and then ordered that they should leave for Siffin from the same point and destroy the roots of corruption. They said that their arms had weakened, swords broken, and arrows finished. Therefore, it would be good to return to Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and increase the number of the army. Their insistence resulted in the Imam's sorrow and he was forced to return to the garrison of al-Nukhaylah in Kufa. Gradually, they left for Kufa to meet their wives and children. After that, a very insignificant group was left in the garrison with whom it was not possible to fight the Syrians.

According to historians, the roots of the Khawarij were plucked on the 9th of Safar, 38 A.H.

(1) *Ibid.* sermon 59.

AFTER THE BATTLE OF AL-NAHRAWAN

The rebellion ended and it was time for the Imam (ʿa) to cleanse his army of saboteurs and once again try to regain peace and security within the vast Islamic lands and end the self-centeredness of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, the source of all seditions**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

Muʿawiyah had placed spies in Iraq who regularly reported the situation to him. Some of them held severe grudges against Imam Ali (ʿa),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** like Amr**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and al-Walid, sons of Uqbah. These two Umayyad brothers possessed intense enmity in their hearts because their father was killed by Imam Ali (ʿa) in the Battle of Badr**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. Al-Walid is introduced by the Holy Quran as lewd. During Uthman's region,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** he was lashed by Imam Ali (ʿa) as punishment for drinking forbidden beverage. It isn't astonishing that these two had motivated Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to wage an all-over war against Imam Ali (ʿa).

Amr**Error! Bookmark not defined.** wrote to Muʿawiyah the details of the Battle of al-Nahrawan; so, Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** seized this opportunity to create chaos through plundering and killing the loyalists to Imam Ali (ʿa). **Error! Bookmark not defined.**He dispatched groups to the regions of Hijaz, Yemen and Iraq, and initiated a psychological war through plunder and murder of innocent people, looting the belongings of women and feeble people. By this way, he prevented Imam Ali (ʿa) from repeating efforts to occupy Syria and wanted to practically prove that the central government wasn't capable of defending its frontiers. Such politics, dictated by Satan, left a great impact. Muʿawiyah killed thousands of innocent unarmed people. The attacking rebels didn't show any compassion to women and children and later on beheaded the infant of Ubaydullah ibn Abbas in front of people's eyes.

This page of history of Imam Ali's government is very tragic and painful. Imam Ali (ʿa) had the political prudence and power to completely destroy the enemy, but what he had at his disposal were only a fist of people; curious, excuse-makers, easy-going and easily impressed by whatever was said by others and, it was due to this reason that he was unable to accomplish his cherished higher objective. History has recorded the details

of these beastly onslaughts. I will try to show the evil intentions of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to Islam, Muslims, and human beings who did not obey him.

Reports reached Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** that Imam Ali (ʿa) was ready to move to Syria and wage war once again. Muʿawiyah wrote a letter and dispatched his couriers to all areas of Syria to be recited in front of people. A group of people agreed to move to Iraq. Habib ibn Maslamah, addressing them, said, "Don't transgress from the point of Siffin because we became victorious over the enemy at that point." Amr proposed that Muʿawiyah should enter deeper into Iraq, because this act would strengthen the morale of the Syrian army and insult the people of Iraq.

Although Muʿawiyah accepted his opinion, he said, "The Syrians are not ready to go beyond Siffin." The debate about the positioning of the army continued when suddenly news arrived that severe fighting had begun between Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and the Khawarij, he had destroyed the rebels of his army and requested people to move to Syria, but they had asked for respite.

In such a situation, Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** appointed Al-Dhahhak ibn Qays**Error! Bookmark not defined.** as commander over three to four thousands people and ordered him to go to Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and plunder the tribes obedient to Imam Ali (ʿa). He should do this task speedily in a manner that if he enters a city in the morning, he should be in another city in the afternoon and shouldn't stop at any particular point to encounter any group. He should continue his sudden attack and run. Al-Dhahhak reached a village located on the Iraqi Hajj route to Mecca. He plundered the belongings of the pilgrims then continued until he encountered Amr ibn Umays, the cousin of Abdullah ibn Masʿud, and killed him with a group of people.

When the news of plundering by al-Dhahhak reached Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, he went up the pulpit and said, "O people, rush to the righteous servant Amr ibn Umays. Rise to help your companions who have been attacked by the enemy. Move, fight with your enemy and secure your villages from the entrance of the enemy."

Yet, they failed to show any significant reaction to the Imam's speech. When the Imam (ʿa) noticed their laziness and incompetence, he said, "By God, I am ready to exchange ten people like you with one of Muʿawiyah's companions! Woe upon you! You came with me but then left me in the

middle of the battlefield alone. By God, I am not unhappy to die with enlightenment and be relieved of you and your difficulties."(1)

Imam (ʿa) came down the pulpit and moved to a region where he appointed Hujr ibn Adi as commander of a group of four thousand and gave him the banner. Hujr started moving and encountered al-Dhahhak. Fighting started between the two groups and nineteen people from the enemy and only two from the companions of Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** were killed. Al-Dhahhak escaped and there was no news from him the next morning. He suffered lack of water because the camel carrying water was lost on the way. Ultimately, he found the way and quenched his thirst.

Imam Ali (ʿa) delivered a sermon regarding the plundering of al-Dhahhak, saying, "O people, your bodies are near each other while your inclinations are different. Your words can soften hard stones but your deeds arouse your enemies' desires. In the assembly, you sit next to each other and boast, but at the time of fighting, you say: O war, take distance from us! Which home after yours would you prevent from the occupation of the enemy? Under whose leadership after me would you like to fight? By God, the deceived is the one who has been deceived by you, who arranges his affairs through your means. By God, he wouldn't achieve any thing except hopelessness and the one who shoots an arrow through your means shoots an arrow without head and bow. What is the matter with you? What is your ailment? What is your cure? The Syrians are men like you, but they are different in character. Is talking without action correct? Is being careless towards God, not practicing piety, and having greed for other than truth, correct?(2)

Aqil, Imam Ali's brother learned about the unmanly attack of al-Dhahhak and wrote a consolation letter to his brother from Mecca and asked, if the Imam (ʿa) permitted, to come to Iraq and participate his brother in happiness and sorrow, because he didn't want to remain alive after him. Imam Ali (ʿa) wrote back and discussed the injustice and cruelty of the people of Quraysh against him: "The same Arabs have made a treaty with each other to fight your brother as they had made a treaty with each other to fight with the Prophet of God (s). They refused to accept the right of your

(1) *Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.**, sermon 97.

(2) *Nahj al-Balaghah*, sermon 29; al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat* 2/416; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh* 3/162; *Tarikh al-Tabri* 4/416; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.** 2/111-25.

brother, regarded his superiority as unseen, attacked him with enmity, deliberately shunned his painstaking efforts at the most critical moments during the period of the Prophet (s) and ultimately moved the parties to fight him."[1]

These words clearly show that Imam Ali (ʿa) considered fighting with Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** as a follow up of the fighting of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** with Abu-Sufyan**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. In reality, under the cover of avenging Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s blood, it was the renaissance of the Battle of the Allies in the land of Siffin.

Imam Ali (ʿa) divided the management of Yemen between Ubaydullah ibn Abbas and Saʿid ibn Namran. In the central region of Yemen, there were followers of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who didn't have any liking for the government of Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and continuously tried to rebel. When they learned about the defeat of the Khawarij and the split in the army of Imam Ali (ʿa), they raised the banner of rebellion and forced out Saʿid from the region of Jand. The other group who did not follow Uthman joined the rebels in order not to pay the taxes.

Saʿid and Ubaydullah reported the situation of the rebels to Imam Ali (ʿa) who consulted a man of Yemeni origin, Yazid ibn Qays, who was living in Kufa.**Error! Bookmark not defined.** It was decided that the Imam (ʿa) should write a letter to the rebels, advise them, and invite all of them once more to obedience to the central government. The Imam (ʿa) sent the letter, which was read before a congregation of elders. The style of the letter was very instructive and effective, but the rebels announced their obedience on condition that Ubaydullah and Saʿid be dismissed. Simultaneously, the rebels seized this opportunity and wrote a letter to Muʿawiyah, attached with some verses of poetry, requesting him to send his representative to Sana'a and Jand so that they could make allegiance with him. If he delayed, they would be helpless and make allegiance with Ali (ʿa).

When the letter reached Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, he decided to spread killing, disorder, and uprisings in Yemen and Hijaz. He called one of his most hardhearted commanders, Busr**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Arta'ah, and said to him, "Take the path of Hijaz and Medina as the commander of three thousand soldiers; wherever you reach

(1) Al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat* 2/431.

a region whose people are loyalists to Ali, open your tongue to say bad things that slander him. Then, invite all of them to my allegiance and leave those who take my allegiance and kill those who refuse to make allegiance. At every point you find loyalists to Ali, kill them."

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** used this method effectively while he was in Damascus and didn't wage a direct war against Imam Ali (ʿa), but he got the same results and regarded those like Walid ibn Utbah who proposed a direct fighting with Ali (ʿa) as foolish and politically inexperienced. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid offers a beautiful analysis and writes: "Al-Walid was full of wrath against Imam Ali (ʿa) because his father was killed by him in the Battle of Badr**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and he was lashed by Imam Ali (ʿa) during Uthman's region**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. He ruled Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** for a long time and didn't think of anything except confrontation with Ali (ʿa). Opposite to al-Walid, Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was farsighted. He had experienced a confrontation with Ali (ʿa) in the Battle of Siffin**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and learned that if he had not raised copies of the Quran on spearheads with deceit and trickery, it was not possible for him to escape and save his life from the clutches of the Imam (ʿa). A second confrontation would possibly burn him in the flames of war; therefore, he thought that it would be expedient to create fear, anxiety, and insecurity in the domain of the government of Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to weaken him and thus prove his inability to manage the Islamic lands."(1)

Busr**Error! Bookmark not defined.** started his movement with three thousand people from Damascus. When he reached Dayr-Marwan, four hundred people among them left due to sickness and with two thousand and six hundred people he moved towards Hijaz. Wherever he reached an area, he confiscated the camels of the people by force and his soldiers mounted upon them to reach another quarter where they freed them and used the camels of the later quarter until they entered Medina. Busr started abusing and slandering against the people on entering Medina and raised the issue of the murder of Uthman, saying, **Error! Bookmark not defined.**"All of you participated in murdering Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** or at least by remaining neutral made him insulted and wretched. By God, I am going to do things that will provide

(1) Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.** 2/8.

comfort to the hearts of the family of Uthman."

He started plundering and killing, and the scared people took refuge in the house of Huwyatib ibn Abd who was Busr's father-in-law. Under the shadow of her intercession, Busr**Error! Bookmark not defined.** slowed down a little. Then he invited all of them to make allegiance with Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. A group made allegiance with him but he didn't stop at that. He burnt down the houses of the famous personalities of Medina who were against Muʿawiyah, for cooperating with Ali (ʿa) in Iraq. He then threatened, "Where is Jabir ibn Abdullah? You should present him here or he should prepare himself for death."

At that moment, Jabir had taken refuge in the house of Ummu-Salamah, the Prophet's virtuous wife, who asked him to decide and he said, "If I don't make allegiance, I will be killed; and if I make allegiance, I will be associated with misguidance and degradation." However, Jabir eventually made allegiance with Busr with the approval of Ummu-Salamah. When Busr finished his assignment in Medina, he started moving towards Mecca, and it was surprising that he appointed Abu-Hurayrah as his deputy in Medina. On his path to Mecca, he killed a group and plundered their wealth. When was nearing Mecca, the governor appointed by Imam Ali (ʿa) left. After entering in Mecca, he started abusing and insulting people, took allegiance to cooperate with Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and warned them against opposing him, saying, "If I receive news of your opposition to Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, I will cut off your roots, plunder your wealth and destroy your homes."

Busr**Error! Bookmark not defined.** left Mecca for al-Ta'if and dispatched a person to kill the people without talking or asking any questions, because he knew that the people of that city were loyalists to Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

Error! Bookmark not defined. After completing his assignment, he left al-Ta'if and al-Maghirah ibn Shuʿbah bade him farewell. On his way to Yemen, he was informed that two infants of Ubaydullah ibn Abbas, the governor, with their mother were in the vicinity. Ubaydullah had handed over his children to a man from the Banu-Kinanah tribe. Busr said to the man, "We don't have any intention of killing you, but want the infants of Ubaydullah." The man said, "In defending those who are in my refuge, I am ready to be killed." Having said this sentence, he attacked the Syrians and ultimately was killed.

They brought the infants of Ubaydullah and with complete hardheartedness killed both of them. A woman cried, “Kill the men; what is the sin of infants? By God, neither before nor after Islam was an infant killed. I swear to God that the government that strengthens its pillars by killing elders and infants isn’t a stable government.” Busr**Error! Bookmark not defined.** replied, “I have decided to kill even the women.”

Busr**Error! Bookmark not defined.** left that region and on his way he killed Ubaydullah’s son-in-law. He then reached Najran, whose inhabitants were all Christians, and said to them, “O Christians! By God, if you do something that I don’t like, I will return, cut off your lineage, and completely destroy your agriculture and homes.”

He went on and on his way killed Abu-Karb, a loyalist to Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and a chief of the Hamdan tribe. Eventually, he reached Sana'a. The governors of the Imam (ʿa), Ubaydullah ibn Abbas and Saʿid ibn Namran, had already left the city and appointed a successor who resisted Busr for some time**Error! Bookmark not defined.** but he was ultimately killed. The blood-thirsty Busr entered the city and killed a group of people and even a delegation coming from Ma'rib. He executed all of them except one person, who returned to his city and declared, “I warn all elders and youths that red death is lying in wait.”

Busr**Error! Bookmark not defined.** then headed for Jayshan whose people were loyalists to Imam Ali (ʿa). They fought Busr but **Error! Bookmark not defined.**after suffering casualties, they were defeated and captured and all them martyred in a terrible manner. He returned to Sana'a once again and killed one hundred people with the excuse that a woman had given refuge to a son of Ubaydullah ibn Abbas.

This was a page from the file of the darkest crimes of Busr.

When the news of Busr’s crimes reached Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, he dispatched a Jariyah ibn Qudamah at the head of two thousand soldiers to Hijaz to punish Busr**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. He took the path of Hijaz from Basra until he reached Yemen and while trying to chase him learnt that he was in the quarter of the Banu-Tamim tribe. When Busr learned about his being pursued by Jariyah, he moved towards Yamamah. When people learned about the assignment of Jariyah, they tried their best to create obstructions in Busr’s path, but he was able to reach Damascus safely and report his journey’s crimes to Muʿawiyah, saying, He “I killed your enemies all the way to and back from

Yemen." Muʿawiyah mockingly answered, **Error! Bookmark not defined.**"You didn't do that; but God did this task!"

History has recorded that Busr**Error! Bookmark not defined.** killed thirty thousand people during this journey while some of them were lynched.

Imam Ali continuously cursed Busr and prayed, "O God! Don't make him dead before taking his reason away from him. O God! Curse Busr**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Amr and Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and pour Your wrath upon them." Imam Ali's prayer was responded and soon Busr became mad and continuously kept saying, "Give me a sword to kill the people." His servant didn't find any alternative except to give him a wooden sword with which he struck the walls and doors until he perished.

Busr's act was similar to the act of Muslim ibn Uqbah who acted on behalf of Yazid ibn Muʿawiyah in Medina at a place called al-Harrah. In reality, father and son were copies of each other and their lackeys in hardheartedness and cruelty were the same. According to Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, "A son being a copy of his father is natural; so, the son should not be blamed."

This sermon of Imam Ali is about Busr**Error! Bookmark not defined.**: "Nothing except Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** has remained in my control. If it is decided that you too become unstable, then woe betide you! I have been informed that Busr**Error! Bookmark not defined.** entered Yemen. By God, I imagine that very soon they will also enter upon you, issue orders upon you, because they in their own falsehood have unity and solidarity with each other but you, on the contrary, on the path of truth have differences with each other. You oppose your leader upon truth while they obey their leader upon falsehood. They return the trust to their leader and you commit treachery against the trust of your leader. If I assign one of you to watch for the wooden bowl, I am scared that he would steal its ropes. Yes, O God, I am disgusted and sad with the people of Kufa and they too are critical of me and saturated with me. Give me better than them and give them an evil master. O God, melt their hearts like salt in water. By God, I would love to exchange all of you here to have in my control one thousand children of Faris ibn Ghannam.

Sufyan ibn Awf**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was appointed by Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** as the commander of a mobilized and fearless army to go to the Euphrates so that he could reach

the city of al-Anbar. He told him that if he encountered resistance, he should attack and plunder them. If he didn't see any army, he should go to al-Mada'in **Error! Bookmark not defined.**and return to Damascus and not, on any account, ever dare to go near Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. Mu'awiyah further said, "If you plunder al-Anbar **Error! Bookmark not defined.**and al-Mada'in**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, it means that you have plundered Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** itself. These plundering attacks make the people of Iraq scared, make my supporters happy, and those who are afraid of their cooperation with me invite them to me. Kill every one who doesn't agree with you on your way, destroy the villages and confiscate their belongings, because confiscating their belongings is equivalent to killing them as it will burn their hearts."

Sufyan narrated: I entered the garrison of Damascus where Mu'awiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** delivered a speech and invited people to cooperate with me. It didn't take very long for six thousand people to be ready to move with me. Then we took the path to the Euphrates. People knew about my presence and crossed the river. I too crossed the river and didn't encounter any one. Then, we reached another place whose inhabitants fled upon seeing me. I decided to move to al-Anbar; so, **Error! Bookmark not defined.**I took two young people as prisoners and asked them what the number of the armed soldiers of Imam Ali was ('a). They said, "They are five hundred people, but a number of them left for Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and right now we don't know how many people remained over there. There might be two hundred people." I divided the soldiers under my command into various groups and dispatched them into al-Anbar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** on the basis of turns so that they could start hand to hand fighting in the city. Then I saw that this act didn't produce any result; so, I dispatched two hundred infantries and reinforced them with cavalry troops. In these conditions, Ali's soldiers scattered and their commander was killed with thirty others. Whatever existed in al-Anbar, I plundered it and returned to Damascus. When I reached Mu'awiyah, I**Error! Bookmark not defined.** reported the incident to him and he said, "I have such high thoughts about you." It wasn't long that people were severely scared and started immigrating to Syria in groups."(1)

Imam Ali ('a) received news that Sufyan had entered al-Anbar**Error!**

(1) Al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat* 2/464-74; *Tarikh al-Tabari* 4/103.

Bookmark not defined. and killed his governor. So angry, he came out of his home and went to the garrison of al-Nukhaylah and people too walked behind him. He delivered a sermon there, saying, "Now then, surely Jihad (holy war) is one of the doors to Paradise, which God has opened for His chief friends. It is the dress of piety and the protective armor of God and His trustworthy shield. Whoever abandons it, God covers him with the dress of disgrace and the clothes of distress. He is kicked with contempt and scorn, and his heart is veiled with screens of neglect. Truth is taken away from him because of missing Jihad. He has to suffer ignominy and justice is denied to him. Beware! I called you insistently to fight these people night and day, secretly and openly, and exhorted you to attack them before they attacked you, because by God, no people have been attacked in the hearts of their houses but they suffered disgrace; but you put it off to others and forsook it till destruction befell you and your cities were occupied. The horsemen of the Banu-Ghamid tribe have reached al-Anbar and killed Hassaan. They have removed your horsemen from the garrison. I have come to know that every one of them entered upon Muslim women and other women under protection of Islam and took away their ornaments from legs, arms, necks and ears and no woman could resist it except by pronouncing the verse: *We are for God and to Him we shall return.* [2:156] Then they got back laden with wealth without any wound or loss of life. If any Muslim dies of grief after all this, he is not to be blamed but rather there is justification for him before me. How strange! How strange! By God, my heart sinks to see the unity of these people on their wrong and your dispersion from your right. Woe and grief befall you. You have become the target at which arrows are shot. You are being killed and you do not kill. You are being attacked but you do not attack. God is being disobeyed and you remain agreeable to it. When I ask you to move against them in summer, you say it is hot weather; spare us till heat subsides from us! When I order you to march in winter, you say it is severely cold; give us time till cold clears from us! These are just excuses for evading heat and cold because if you run away from heat and cold, you would be, by God, running away in a greater degree from sword. O you semblance of men, not men, your intelligence is that of children and your wit is that of the occupants of the curtained canopies. I wish I had not seen you nor known you. By God, this acquaintance has brought about shame and resulted in repentance. May God fight you! You have filled my heart with pus and loaded my bosom with rage. You made me drink mouthful of grief one after the other. You shattered my counsel by disobeying and leaving me so much so that Quraysh started saying that the son of Abu-Talib is brave but does

not know tactics of war. Is any one of them more fierce in war and more older in it than I am? I rose for it although yet within twenties, and here I am, have crossed over sixty, but one who is not obeyed can have no opinion."(1)

The plan of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to create fear in the hearts of the people of Iraq wasn't limited only to the dispatches of these three plunderers and executioners; rather, he dispatched other persons for other assignments. For example, he dispatched al-Nuʿayman to attack and plunder the city of Ayn al-Tamr, located to the west of the Euphrates. He assigned Yazid ibn Shajarah to go to Mecca and plunder the people's wealth. Ultimately, these plots produced results and a severe fear and intense anxiety engulfed the hearts of the Iraqi people. These tragedies were inflicted after the Battle of al-Nahrawan when internal pressures from one side and external pressures from another harassed the people of Iraq, especially the loyalists to Imam Ali.

(1) *Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.**, sermon 27.

VICTORY OF EGYPT AND MARTYRDOM OF MUHAMMAD IBN ABI-BAKR

After the murder of Uthman, all of the Islamic provinces except Syria came under the domain of Imam Ali's government. In 36 A.H., he appointed Qays ibn Saʿd as the governor of Egypt and dispatched him over there. Later, he dismissed him from that post and in the very same year after the Battle of the Camel appointed Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. History has recorded two letters from the Imam (ʿa) written officially; one as an appointment letter and the second one sent to him after his taking over that position in Egypt.

Abu-Ishaq in *al-Gharat*, also narrated the two letters, the first of which dated 1st of Ramadan,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** 36 A.H: "In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful. This is an order from the servant of God, Ali the Commander of the Faithful, to Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr who is**Error! Bookmark not defined.** appointed as the governor of Egypt. He orders you to practice piety to God, obey Him in private and in public, fear Him inside and outside, be compassionate to Muslims and harsh to mischief-makers and fair with those under our protection, avenge the oppressed by treating the oppressors harshly, forgive and pardon people and act nicely to the extent possible, because God likes the righteous and punishes the evildoers. He orders that Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr should invite people to obey the central government and associate with Muslims, because in this deed there is prosperity and great reward that can't be measured or, its reality identified. He orders that the taxes of the land, as before, should be collected from people without any increase or decrease and distributed among the deserving like it was done in the past. He orders the governor to be hospitable to people, treat all of them equally in the assembly and not discriminate between relatives and outsiders in their rights. He orders him to issue verdicts fairly with and spread justice. He shouldn't follow his whimsical desires nor be scared of the admonishment of admonishers in the path of God, for God is always with those who practice piety, and he should prefer obeying Him over others. Peace be upon you."(1)

The date of this letter coincides with the dismissal of Qays and indicates that the duration of his government was very short, because Imam Ali (ʿa)

(1) Al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat* 1/244.

was elected as the caliph at the end of 35 A.H. and this letter was written eight months after that. When this letter reached Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr, he stood among the people of Egypt, delivered a speech, and read the letter of Imam Ali (ʿa) aloud. He wrote a letter to Imam Ali (ʿa) requesting about some legal or illegal issues: "This is a letter to the servant of God and the Commander of the Faithful, from Muhammad son of Abu-Bakr. May God bless you with peace! I thank God except Whom there is no other god. The Commander of the Faithful may write a letter to one like me who is involved in these issues, clarifying our mandatory obligations as well as the judicial commands of Islam. May God increase His rewards to the Commander of the Faithful!"

Imam Ali (ʿa) replied to his letter and guided him regarding legal judgments, commandments of ablution and prayer, encouraging good, forbidding evil, fasting and sitting in mosques; and then reminded him of the issues of death, accounting of deeds and characteristics of Paradise and Hell.

Once Imam Ali's letter reached Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, he consulted it regularly and issued juridical verdicts according to it. When Amr ibn al-Aas attacked Egypt, Muhammad was defeated and killed, his letters fell into the hands of Amr who collected and sent them to Muʿawiyah. This particular letter caught the attention of Muʿawiyah and he scrutinized it more carefully. Al-Walid observed the astonishment of Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and said, "Allow me to burn this letter." Muʿawiyah replied, "Take it easy! You shouldn't give your opinion in this regard." Al-Walid retorted, "You don't have the right of giving your opinion! Is it correct that the people know that you have the traditions of Abu-Turab (Imam Ali) and you learn your lesson from them and issue judicial verdicts? If that is the case, why do you fight him?" Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** answered, "Woe upon you! Do you order me to burn such a precious treasure of knowledge? By God, I have never heard of knowledge more perfect, steadfast, and explicit than this." Al-Walid repeated his words and said, "If you are astonished with the knowledge and judicial verdicts of Ali, then why do you fight him?" Muʿawiyah in his reply said, "Had Abu-Turab not killed Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and not been seated upon the place of issuing religious decrees, we would have gained knowledge from him." He remained silent for a while and then said to the people around him, "We will never say that these are the letters of Ali. We will say that these are the letters of Abu-Bakr that reached his son Muhammad as

inheritance and we, too, issue judicial verdicts and religious decrees according to them."

The letters of Imam Ali (ʿa) were kept with the Umayyads until Umar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Abd al-Aziz revealed the truth about them.

Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** expressed sorrow when he learned that those letters had fallen in Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**'s hand. Abdullah ibn Salamah said: The Imam (ʿa) led us in a congregational prayer and then I observed some signs of sorrow upon his blessed face. He quoted some Quranic verses that expressed sorrow. I asked him, "What do you mean by reciting those verses?" and he answered, "I appointed Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr as governor of Egypt and he wrote me a letter saying that he didn't have sufficient knowledge about the traditions of the Prophet (s); so, I wrote him a letter and explained those traditions. He has been killed and the letter has fallen in the hands of the enemy."

Governor of Imam Ali and the neutral individuals

A group of people had distanced themselves from the government of Muhammad ibn Qays and introduced themselves as neutral. After one month of Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr's government **Error! Bookmark not defined.**, he offered the neutral individuals two options; either announce their obedience and association with him or leave Egypt. In reply to the governor, they said, "Give us some time to think." The governor didn't accept their reply and they too showed resistance and prepared their defense.

During these days, the Battle of Siffin**Error! Bookmark not defined.** started. When news reached them that the solution of differences between Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Imam Ali (ʿa) had been assigned to two judges and the opponents had ended the war, the boldness of this group increased and they openly declared their opposition to the government. The governor was forced to dispatch al-Harith ibn Jamhan and Yazid ibn al-Harith to guide and advise them, but they were killed by them. He dispatched a third person who was also killed.

The murder of this group encouraged some people to seek retaliation for the blood of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, since grounds for opposition were already available. Other groups joined them and Egypt was engulfed with disturbances and the young governor couldn't maintain its

peace and security. When the Imam (ʿa) learned about the situation of Egypt, he said, "Only two people can return the security back to Egypt; Qays ibn Saʿd who earlier had the ruling affairs in his hands and Malik al-Ashtar." He mentioned it when he had already dispatched Malik as the governor of al-Jazirah. Qays ibn Saʿd was in the Imam's saddle but his presence in the army stationed in Iraq was necessary. The Imam (ʿa) wrote a letter to Malik who was in Nasibin, a vast area between Syria and Iraq, explaining his position as well as Egypt's. He wrote, "You are one of those with whose help I keep the pillar of religion stable, destroy the mutiny of rebels, and fill the most horrible vacuums. I appointed Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr**Error! Bookmark not defined.** as the governor of Egypt but a group opposed him and, being young and inexperienced, he wasn't able to subdue them. Rush to me as soon as possible so that whatever should be done be reviewed and appoint some reliable person as your successor."

When the letter reached Malik, he appointed Shuʿayb ibn Amir as his successor and rushed to the Imam (ʿa), who asked him to leave for Egypt as soon as possible because he didn't have any one else at his disposal except him. Knowing Malik's intelligence and farsightedness, the Imam did not recommend anything to him. He knew that he would seek God's help in hardships, mix harshness with softness and, as far as possible, behave compassionately and, when nothing would work except harshness, he would use his power.

When the news of Malik's dispatch reached Muʿawiyah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** he was shocked and upset, because he eyed Egypt greedily. He knew very well that if the ruling affairs were taken over by Malik, the situation over there would become worse for him than the period of Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. So, he thought about the alternatives and, by promising a taxpayer freedom from any taxes, arranged the preliminaries of Malik's assassination. The Imam (ʿa) replied to the people of Egypt who had asked for a new governor, writing to them this letter: "I am sending a man to you who doesn't let sleep enter his eyes during the fearful days and is never afraid of the enemy at horrible moments and he is more intense than fire upon the infidels. He is Malik, son of al-Harith, from the Midhhaj tribe. Listen to his words and follow his command so far as it compliments the truth. He is a sword among swords of God that is never dulled and his stroke never misses the target. If he commands you to march to the enemy, then move on; and if he orders you to halt, then halt. His command is my command. By dispatching him to Egypt, I have given you more priority over myself because of my

concern for you and the firmness that I have against your enemies."(1)

The new governor moved with required speed and arrived in Qalzam which is located at two halting places from al-Fistat. He resided in the house of a man of that area. This man won Malik's trust because of his hospitality and offered him a poisoned sherbet of honey, and this cutting sword of God entered into its sheath forever and surrendered his soul to the Creator. In 38 A.H., he closed his eyes to the world in Qalzam and was buried there.

This person at whose house Malik resided had already been purchased by Malik's enemy, Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. Some historians have written his martyrdom more comprehensively in a different manner:

When Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** learned about the Imam's decision to appoint Malik as governor of Egypt, he requested an influential farmer from Qalzam to kill Malik with whatever it was possible for him and after Muʿawiyah's domination upon the land of Egypt, he would be free from payment of land taxes as compensation for his services. Muʿawiyah did not stop at this point; he also asked the people of Syria to continuously curse Malik and pray to God to destroy him to strengthen the morale of the people and to prove that he and his followers were walking on the path of God. Malik's death would thus gladden the people of Syria whose confidence in their leader would increase.

Malik reached Qalzam, and the person assigned by Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to kill him invited him to his house to gain his trust. He thus pretended to be loyal to Imam Ali (ʿa). He spread the table, served food and placed upon it a sherbet of honey that had such a virulent poison that it wasn't long before Malik was dead.

When the news of Malik's murder reached Muʿawiyah,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** he went up the pulpit and said, "O People! The son of Abu-Talib had two powerful hands; Ammar**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was killed in the Battle of Siffin**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Malik al-Ashtar is now dead."

The people of Syria celebrated the martyrdom of Malik happily because **Error! Bookmark not defined.**they possessed a severe grudge against him since the Battle of Siffin. On the other front, Malik's martyrdom

(1) *Nahj al-Balaghah*,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** letter 38; al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat* 1/260.

saddened Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** very much that he wept bitterly with a loud voice and said, "It is befitting for wailing women to mourn for one like Malik. Where are people like Malik? He then went up the pulpit and said, "Praise be to God, the Lord of the universe. O God, I place the tragedy of Malik in the account of Your path, because his death is the greatest calamity of the world. God's blessing be upon Malik. He remained faithful to his commitment, completed his life, and met his God. In spite of our commitment to remain patient in all tragedies after the death of the Prophet (s), the tragedy of Malik's martyrdom is one of the most bitter of tragedies."(1)

Fudhayl narrated: When the news of Malik's martyrdom reached Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, I went to him and noticed that he was continuously expressing sorrow and praying, "O God, bestow prosperity upon Malik. What a person Malik was! If he was a mountain, it was the most unique; and if he was a stone, it was very hard. By God, your death, Malik, makes one world tremble and another world cheerful. For the likes of Malik, it is befitting for wailing women to mourn and cry bitterly. Is there anyone like Malik?"

Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** continuously expressed intense sadness for a couple of days and the effect of sorrow was clearly visible upon his face.

Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was upset because the Imam (ʿa) had dismissed him and replaced him with Malik al-Ashtar. Since the news of his anxiety reached the Imam (ʿa), he wrote this letter to him: "I have been told that the dispatch of al-Ashtar to Egypt has made you upset but I have not taken this action because you acted negligently in the discharge of your obligations. If I removed you from the position of governor of Egypt, I will make you governor of some other province whose management will not be heavy and its government will be interesting for you. The person I have appointed as the governor of Egypt was my well-wisher who was harsh upon my enemies. May God bless him! His lifetime came to its end and he met death while I was happy with him. May God be happy with him and bless him with His best rewards! Now, it is required that in order to confront the enemy, you should transfer your army outside the city, make a garrison over there, follow your task with farsightedness and prepare for the war with courage. Invite the people to God and seek steadfastness from Him Who is sufficient for your important

(1) Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* 6/77; al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat* 1/264.

affairs and helps you in your hardships."[1]

Muhammad wrote back, "There is none harsher to the enemies of the Commander of the Faithful and more compassionate to his friends than I am. I have placed my army garrison outside the city, pardoned all of people except those who entered through the gate of war and demonstrated their enmity towards me. In any circumstance, I remain the follower of the Commander of the Faithful."

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined. Error! Bookmark not defined.**considered the opportunity as suitable to dispatch soldiers under the command of Amr ibn al-Aas to take away Egypt from the domain of the government of Ali (ʿa). In order to execute this dangerous plot, he invited a group of commanders of his army, like Habib ibn Maslamah, Busr**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Arta'ah, al-Dhahhak ibn Qays, Abd al-Rahman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Khalid and others. He also invited other people for consultation. Then he asked the congregation, "Do you know why I have called you here?"

Amr said, "You have invited us for the victory of Egypt, since it possesses fertile lands as well as lots of revenue in taxes. You and your companions' dignity is guaranteed in its victory."

Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** rose to testify to Amr's words and reminded them that he had promised Amr that if he would win the battle, he would bestow Egypt upon him. Lengthy discussions were then held in that assembly and ultimately it was decided that plenty of letters should be written to the people of Egypt, both friends and foes, and the friends should be ordered to be steadfast and offer resistance and the foes should be invited to peace or be threatened with fighting. Muʿawiyah wrote letters to two opponents of Imam Ali (ʿa) and then dispatched Amr to Egypt with a huge army. When Amr reached the frontiers of Egypt, supporters of Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** gathered around and joined him. Amr wrote a letter to the governor of Egypt from that location: "I don't like to have an encounter with you and spill your blood. The people of Egypt have a unanimous opinion against you and are ashamed to obey you."

Amr sent this letter to Muhammad together with Muʿawiyah's**Error! Bookmark not defined.** letter that he had written for him. The governor of Egypt after reading both letters dispatched them to Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error!**

(1) Al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat* 1/268.

Bookmark not defined. and reported the advancement of the Syrian army to the frontiers of Egypt, saying, "If you want Egypt to remain in your hand, you must help me with money and troops." The Imam (ʿa) urged the governor to be steadfast. Then, Muhammad replied to the letters of Amr and Muʿawiyah.

Ultimately, he was forced to mobilize people to go to welcome the army of Amr. He organized the preliminary army with two thousand people under the command of Kinanah ibn Bashar and he, with two thousand people, moved behind him. When the vanguards of the Egyptian army encountered the Syrians, they truthfully crushed the columns of the enemy but ultimately due to shortage of manpower were defeated. Kinanah dismounted from his horse and engaged in hand to hand fighting with the enemy reciting the following verse and was martyred: *No soul can die except by God's leave and a term appointed. Whoso desireth the reward of the world, We bestow on him thereof; and whoso desireth the reward of the Hereafter, We bestow on him thereof. We shall reward the thankful.* [3:145]

Martyrdom of Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr*Error! Bookmark not defined.*

The martyrdom of Kinanah emboldened the Syrian army who decided to continue their advance to the garrison of Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. When they reached his garrison, they found his companions scattered and he having taken refuge in a ruined place. Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Hadij noticed him, arrested him in the ruins, and brought him out from there and transferred him to al-Fistat, the center of Amr's army, dying of thirst.

Abd al-Rahman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Abi-Bakr, Muhammad's brother, was in Amr's army. He shouted, "I won't permit you to kill my brother like that." He requested Amr to order the commander of his army, Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Hadij, to change his mind about killing him. Amr sent his representative to the commander that he should hand over Muhammad alive, but the latter replied, "Kinanah who was my cousin is killed; Muhammad too shouldn't remain alive." Muhammad asked for water, but the commander, "Uthman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was killed thirsty." So, he refused to give him water.

At the end, he said, "I will put your body inside the stomach of that dead donkey and then burn it." Muhammad replied, "You, the enemies of God, have repeatedly treated God's saints in this way. I hope that God will make

this fire cold and prosperous for me like He did with Prophet Abraham; and make it a disaster for you and your companions, and God will burn your leaders, Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and Amr with the fire that will be more fierce whenever they will try to silence it." These words made Muʿawiyah lose his temper and cut off Muhammad's head, put him inside the stomach of a dead donkey and burn him.

Muhammad's martyrdom made two people very sorrowful and sad. One of them was his sister A'ishah who wept bitterly for him. She cursed Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Abu-Sufyan**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Amr ibn al-Aas and Muʿawiyah ibn Hadij at the end of each prayer. A'ishah took over the guardianship of his wife and children and his son**Error! Bookmark not defined.** Qasim was raised in her guardianship. The other was Asma' bint Umays who for a period had the honor of being the wife of Jaʿfar ibn Abu-Talib. After his martyrdom, she was married to Abu-Bakr and Muhammad was born from her. After Abu-Bakr died, she was married to Ali ibn Abi-Talib (ʿa) and a son, Yahya, was born from her. When she learned about the fate of her son, she was severely affected but she controlled her wrath, went upon the place of prayer, cursed his murderers, and was inflicted with severe bleeding.

Amr in his letter to Muʿawiyah informed him of the martyrdom of these two people and like political players who always lied to each other, glorified himself as righteous and said, "We invited them to the Book of God and the Prophet's traditions, but they opposed the truth and remained upon their wretchedness. Ultimately, fighting occurred between us and them. We resorted to God for help and He slapped their faces and backs and made them surrender to us with their hands tied."

Abdullah ibn Qaʿid entered Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** wailing and informed Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** about the most horrible martyrdom of Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. Imam Ali (ʿa) ordered that people should assemble to hear his words. Then he said, "This is the wailing for Muhammad and your brothers in Egypt. Amr, the enemy of God and your enemy, has gone over there and dominated them. I could never imagine that the commitment of misguided ones to falsehood and their confidence upon their tyrant would be more steadfast than your commitment to the truth. It seems that their attack upon Egypt is as though they have invaded you. As soon as possible, rush to help them. O servants of God, from the point of view of prosperity and blessings, this is far better than Syria and the people of Egypt are far superior than the people of Syria. Don't give up Egypt. If Egypt remains in

your hand, it will be a dignity for you and misery for your enemy. As soon as possible, go to the garrison so that tomorrow you can meet each other."

After several days of the chiefs of Iraq coming to see the Imam (ʿa), Malik ibn Kaʿb, as commander of an army of two thousand soldiers, left for Egypt.

The Imam (ʿa) describes the event in his letter to Ibn Abbas as thus: "Egypt has fallen to the enemy and Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr—**Error! Bookmark not defined.**God send His blessings upon him—was martyred. I place this tragedy in the account of God and expect its rewards from Him. The sorrow of giving up a compassionate son, a most endeavoring servant, a cutting sword and a defensive power is immense. I have encouraged people to join him and ordered them to rush to him before any other tragedy strikes. I have invited all of them openly and privately to move to him. A group with reluctance announced their cooperation, another group pretended to be sick, and a third group clearly refused their support. I pray God to rescue me from the hands of these people as soon as possible."(1)

The martyrdom of Muhammad was very bitter and painful for Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** who said with tearful eyes, "He was a son to me; and to my sons as well for my brother's sons, he was a brother."

He added, "I loved him and nurtured him in my own bosom."

These tragedies occurred one after another and sharp-sighted and intelligent individuals could easily have prophesied the end of the government of Imam Ali (ʿa) because of foolish friends. The Imam (ʿa) was facing a situation where Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was dominating Syria and Amr had taken control of Egypt, and groups of plunderers and killers were continuously attacking the surrounding areas to completely destroy the security and weaken the central government. What option was left for Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** to challenge these catastrophes? How could he have taken help from the people of Iraq with their dead hearts to eradicate the roots of corruption. History has written that during the last days of his life, Imam Ali (ʿa) delivered an eloquent fiery sermon that made the dead hearts of Iraqis come alive.

Nawfal ibn Fadhlah narrates the sermon: "O People! I have advised the

(1) *Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.**, letter 35.

messengers among you and I have given you whatever their successors were assigned to hand over to forthcoming generations. By using my lash, I tried to civilize you, but you didn't pay attention to my guidance. I tried to lead with my prudent words, but you didn't unite. By God, are you waiting for a leader other than me who will level the path for you and lead you to the path of God? My bothers, whose blood was spilled in Siffin, didn't suffer any loss because they did not witness such a day, drink the cups of anger and the water polluted with this sort of life. By God, they reached God's countenance and God perfected His bounties upon them and positioned them in a place of calmness and immunity. Where are my brothers who stepped on the path of truth and sacrificed their lives in that path? Where is Ammar? Where is Ibn al-Tayyihan? Where is Dhu'l-Shahadatayn? Where are all of them and their brothers who were steadfast in their objective and intention?"

At this moment, Imam Ali (ʿa) put his hand of his beard and wept bitterly. He then said, "Alas! Pity! O my brothers! Where are you now who read the Quran and acted upon it, thought about its commandments and implemented them, made the traditions alive and killed innovations? They were invited to fight against the enemy and they responded positively. They had absolute confidence in their leader and followed him."

He then shouted at people, "O servants of God! Fighting is incumbent upon you; I am going to my army garrison today and whoever is interested in joining me on the battlefield should get ready to move."(1)

This fiery and enthusiastic sermon of Imam Ali (ʿa) revived the dead hearts of the Iraqi people and in a short period approximately forty thousand people gathered to fight in the path of God against His enemy in the battlefield of Siffin. The Imam (ʿa) assigned the standard to his son al-Husayn (ʿa), Qyas ibn Saʿd and Abu-Ayyub and dispatched each one of them accompanied by ten thousand soldiers. Unfortunately, a week hadn't passed when the sword of Ibn Muljam martyred him. When the news of the Imam's martyrdom reached the soldiers outside Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, all of them returned to Kufa and became like sheep that had lost their shepherd and being seized by wolves.

(1) *Nahj al-Balaghah*, sermon 177.

THE LAST PAGE OF IMAM ALI'S LIFE

The Battle of al-Nahrawan ended and Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** returned to Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, but a group of Khawarij who had repented in al-Nahrawan again raised the slogans of opposition and created sedition and disturbances. Imam Ali (ʿa) sent messages, invited to peace, and warned them against opposing the government, but when he was completely disappointed with them, he waged a powerful crushing attack upon those who rebelled and destroyed them; some of them were killed, some injured, and a few of them fled. One of the Khawarij who fled to Mecca was Abd al-Rahman**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Muljam from the Murad tribe.

The fleeing Khawarij made Mecca the center of their rebellious activities; and three of them; namely, Abd al-Rahman ibn Muljam, Bakr ibn Abdullah al-Tamimi, and Amr ibn Bakr, gathered at night, reviewed the situation of those days, the blood spilling and internal warfare, remembered their killed at al-Nahrawan and ultimately reached the conclusion that Ali (ʿa), Muʿawiyah and Amr are responsible for this spilling of blood and killing of brothers, and if these three people could be removed from the scene through their terror, Muslims would be able to know their duty and would elect a caliph of their liking. Thus, these three people made a commitment and further strengthened it by taking oaths that each one of them would commit to kill one of those three persons.

Ibn Muljam committed to kill Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Amr ibn Bakr took the responsibility of killing Amr, and Bakr ibn Abdullah assumed the responsibility of killing Muʿawiyah. The map of this plot was drawn at Mecca and in order to ensure that all three achieved their aim, they decided at the nineteenth night of Ramadan**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, and each one moved towards the city of his own assignment. Amr moved to Egypt, Bakr **Error! Bookmark not defined.**to Damascus, and Ibn Muljam to Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

Bakr went to the Mosque of Damascus and on the assigned night stood in the first line of the prayer and when Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** put his head down in prostration, he attacked him, but due to nervousness his sword missed the target and instead of hitting Muʿawiyah upon his head injured him severely in the groin. He was quickly moved to

his house and made to lie down upon his bad. When the attacker was brought before him, Muʿawiyah asked him, “How dare you do such an act?” He replied, “If the emir pardons me, I can give him glad tidings.” Muʿawiyah asked, “What is your glad tiding?” He said, “One of my colleagues has killed Ali at this night, and if you don’t believe me, keep me as a prisoner until the news reaches you, and in case he isn’t killed, I commit myself to kill him and return to you again.” Muʿawiyah kept him in custody until the news arrived of the killing of Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** and he freed him or, according to other writers, killed him at the same time.

Physicians saw Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.**’s wound and said, “If you do not want children, we can cure your wound; otherwise, the injury should be tempered with hot fire.” Muʿawiyah scared of being tempered with fire and accepted cutting off his lineage and said, “Yazid and Abdullah are sufficient for me.”

Amr ibn Bakr went to the mosque in Egypt at the same night and stood in the first line of the prayer. Amr was suffering from severe fiver and didn’t go to the mosque. He sent Kharijah to lead the prayer and Amr ibn Bakr killed him instead of Amr ibn al-Aas and when he learned about the incident, he said, “I wanted to kill Amr but God wanted the killing of Kharijah.”

Abd al-Rahman ibn Muljam came to Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** on the twentieth of Shaʿban, 40 A.H. It is said that when Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** learned about his arrival, he said, “Has he arrived? Except for him, nothing burdens my shoulders and this is the time for that.” Ibn Muljam resided at the house of al-Ashʿath ibn Qays for one month and every day prepared himself by sharpening his sword. He met a woman named Qatam**Error! Bookmark not defined.** following the faction of the Khawarij and fell in love with her. According to al-Masʿudi, Qatam was Ibn Muljam’s cousin and her father was killed in the Battle of al-Nahrawan. She was one of the most beautiful women of Kufa and when Ibn Muljam saw her, he forgot every thing and asked for her hand in marriage. Qatam**Error! Bookmark not defined.** replied, “With perfect liking, I would accept you as my husband subject to the condition that you pay my dowry according to my desire.” He asked, “Tell me what you want.” She increased the price of her dowry and said, “Three thousands Dirhams, one slave, one maid and the murder of Ali ibn Abi-Talib.”

Ibn Muljam said, “I don’t think that you want me if you suggest my killing

Ali," but she answered, "Go for a surprise attack. In that case, if you kill him, both of us will have taken our revenge and will live a prosperous life; and if you are killed in this path, the reward of the Hereafter and whatever God has stored for you is far superior as compared to the bounties of this world." Ibn Muljam said, "I haven't come to Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** except to accomplish this task." Qatam**Error! Bookmark not defined.** said, "I will arrange that a few people from my tribe accompany you to help in this task." She assigned another man from the Khawarij to go with Ibn Muljam.

Determined to kill Imam Ali (ʿa), he**Error! Bookmark not defined.** met another man and said to him, "Are you a seeker of the blessings of the world and the Hereafter?" He asked, "What do you mean?" "Help me murder Ali ibn Abi-Talib," Ibn Muljam said, and the man replied, "Woe betide you! Are you not aware of his services, precedence, and sacrifices for the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**?" Ibn Muljam said, "Woe betide you! Don't you know that he believed in the arbitration and killed our brothers who were steadfast performers of prayers? In order to avenge our brothers-in-faith, we are going to kill him." The man thus agreed and Ibn Muljam arranged for a sword, layered it with deadly poison and came to the Mosque of Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** at the fixed time.

Those two met Qatam who was participating in a sit-in in the mosque on Friday, the thirteenth of Ramadan, and she told both of them that Mujashiʿ had also volunteered to cooperate with them. When the time of action arrived, Qatam tied handkerchiefs of silk on their hands, and all three took their swords in their hands, spent the night among those who remained inside the mosque, and sat down in front of a gate of the mosque.

Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** continued informing about his martyrdom that year in Ramadan. One day, in the middle of the month, he was sitting on the top of the pulpit; he stroked his blessed beard and said, "The most wretched will dye these hairs with my blood."**Error! Bookmark not defined.** He also said, "Ramadan**Error! Bookmark not defined.** has arrived and it is the lord of all months. In this month, the situation of the government will change. This year, you will perform the Hajj pilgrimage in one line without the Imam and this indicates that I won't be among you."(1)

(1) Shaykh al-Mufid, *Kitab al-Irshad*, page 151; al-Fattal, *Rawdat al-Waʿizin* 1/163.

His companions said, “With these words, he is giving the news of his death, but we don’t understand it.” Every night, Imam Ali (ʿa) went to the home of one of his children; al-Hasan, al-Husayn, and Zaynab the wife of Abdullah ibn Jaʿfar. He didn’t eat more than three morsels of food. One of his children asked the reason and he replied, “The command of God is coming and I want my stomach to be empty, not more than one or two nights remains.” The same night he was struck by the sword.

At the night of his martyrdom, he was the guest of his daughter Ummu-Kulthum**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. He broke his fast with three morsels of food and then got busy in worship and remained restless and anxious from the beginning of the night until morning. He looked at the movement of the stars; at the break of dawn, his restlessness increased and he said, “Neither I not has he who told me that this is the night of my martyrdom lied.”

This was prophesied by the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** narrated: The Prophet (s) wept while delivering a sermon about the excellences of the month of Ramadan**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. I asked, “Why are you weeping?” and he replied, “I weep for the fate that will be inflicted upon you during this month. I see coming that you are busy in your prayer and the most wretched person, equivalent to one who hamstrung the she-camel of Prophet Salih, will inflict a stroke upon your head and dye your beard with the blood of your head.”

Eventually, the night ended and the Imam (ʿa) went to the mosque for leading the Dawn Prayer. Ducks of the house followed him and by clutching his clothing tried to prevent him from going outside. As they tried to shush them away from him, he said, “Leave them alone; they are criers preparing for the forthcoming mourning.”

Imam al-Hasan (ʿa) said, “Why are you voicing a bad omen?” He replied, “O son! I am not voicing a bad omen, but my heart testifies that I will be killed.”

After hearing the Imam’s words, Ummu-Kulthum**Error! Bookmark not defined.** became so sad and said, “Please order Juʿdah to go to the mosque to lead the prayers on your behalf,” but Imam Ali (ʿa) replied, “There is no escape from the destiny of God.” He then tightened his belt, murmured the following verses, and left for the mosque:

Tighten your belt very firmly for death,

Because death is coming to meet you.

And when death comes to you,

Don't indulge in wailing and crying.

Imam Ali (ʿa) entered inside the mosque, stood for the prayer, and started it. He then recited the Quranic verse of the prayers, bowed, and then prostrated. Ibn Muljam shouted, "There is no command except God's, O Ali" and struck a heavy blow upon the Imam's head with his poison-saturated sword. This stroke struck on the same spot where the sword of Amr ibn Abd-Wudd had struck and cracked the bone of the forehead.

Shaykh al-Tusi**Error! Bookmark not defined.** narrated another version in his book *al-Amali*, which he reported **Error! Bookmark not defined.**from Imam Ali ibn Musa al-Rida (ʿa) who received it from his fathers successively:

Ibn Muljam struck his sword upon Imam Ali's blessed head while he was in the state of prostration.(1)

The famous Shiite exegete of the Holy Quran, Abu'l-Futuh al-Razi, narrated the following:

Imam Ali (ʿa) had recited eleven verses of Surah al-Anbiya' in the first unit of the prayer when Ibn Muljam struck him.(2)

As for Sibt ibn al-Jawzi he wrote: When the Imam (ʿa) positioned himself at the altar, a few people attacked him and Ibn Muljam struck a stroke(3) and his colleagues fled immediately.

The blood from the head of the Imam (ʿa) started spilling on the altar and dyed his beard with red. In this condition, he said, "By the Lord of the Kaʿbah, I have won." He then recited the following Quranic verse: *Thereof We created you, thereunto We return you and thence We bring you forth for a second time.* [20:55]

When he was struck by the sword, Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** cried, "Get him!" People rushed towards Ibn Muljam but no one dared get close to him and only hit him with their swords. Then, Qutham ibn Abbas went ahead, seized him by his arms and crashed him on the ground. When they brought him near Imam Ali (ʿa), he said to him, "Are

(1) Al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar* 9/650.

(2) *Tafsir Abu'l-Futuh* 4/425.

(3) Sibt Ibn al-Jawzi, *Tadhkirat al-Khawass*, page 177.

you son of Muljam?" "Yes," he replied.

When Imam Ali identified the attacker, he said to his son al-Hasan, "Take care of your prisoner, keep his stomach full and tie him firmly. If I die, join him with me so that I can complain against him before God; and if I remain alive, I will either punish or forgive him."

Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn put their father on a coarse carpet carried him home with others from the Banu-Hashim clan. Once again, they presented Ibn Muljam before the Imam (ʿa) who looked at him and said, "If I die, kill him the way he has killed me; and if I survive, I will see what I decide about him." The criminal replied, "I bought this sword for one thousand Dirhams, then spent one thousand Dirhams on its poisoning. May God destroy it if it does treachery with me!"

At that moment, Ummu-Kulthum**Error! Bookmark not defined.** said to him, "O enemy of God! You killed the Commander of the Faithful" That renegade replied, "I didn't kill the Commander of the Faithful, I killed your father."

She said, "I hope that he recovers his health from this stroke," but Ibn Muljam replied rudely, "I believe that you will soon mourn upon him. By God, I have struck him with a stroke that if it is divided among all people of the world, it will destroy all of them."

A small amount of milk was brought to the Imam (ʿa) who drank a little and then said, "Give some milk to your prisoner and don't make him uncomfortable." When the Imam (ʿa) was struck with the sword, physicians of Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.** assembled in his presence. Among them was Athir ibn Amr, a specialist in the treatment of wounds. When he examined the wound, he requested a warm piece of lung from a freshly slaughtered sheep. Then he took out the vein from it and placed it inside the wound. When he brought it out, he said, "O Ali, this makes your death certain because the stroke has reached your brain and its treatment is not possible."

At that moment, Imam (ʿa) requested ink and paper and wrote his last will addressed to his two sons al-Hasan (ʿa) and al-Husayn (ʿa). This will is in reality addressed to all human beings of all ages, since it was recorded with authentic documents by a group of narrators and historians who lived before Sayyid al-Radhi and after him. The original will is more than what Sayyid al-Radhi has included in *Nahj al-Balaghah***Error! Bookmark not defined.**. Parts of the will read: "I advise you (both) to fear God and that

you should not hanker after the (pleasures of this) world even though it may run after you. Do not be sorry for anything of this world that you have been denied. Speak the truth and act (in expectation) for reward. Be an enemy of the oppressor and helper of the oppressed.

I advise you (both) and all my children and members of my family and everyone whom my writing reaches, to fear God, to keep your affairs in order, and to maintain good relations among yourselves for I have heard your grandfather (the Holy Prophet) saying: Improvement of mutual differences is better than general prayers and fasting.

(Fear) God (and) keep God in view in the matter of orphans. So do not allow them to starve and they should not be ruined in your presence.

(Fear) God (and) keep God in view in the matter of your neighbors, because they were the subject of the Prophet's advice. He went on advising in their favor till we thought he would allow them a share in inheritance.

(Fear) God (and) keep God in view in the matter of the Quran. No one should excel you in acting upon it. (Fear) God (and) keep God in view in the matter of prayer, because it is the pillar of your religion.

(Fear) God (and) keep God in view in the matter of your Lord's House. Do not forsake it so long as you live, because if it is abandoned you will not be spared.

(Fear) God (and) keep God in view in the matter of jihad with the help of your property, lives and tongues in the way of God.

You should keep to a respect for kinship and spending for others. Avoid turning away from one another and severing mutual relations. Do not give up bidding for good and forbidding from evil lest the mischievous gain positions over you, and then if you will pray, the prayers will not be granted."

Then he said, "O sons of Abd al-Muttalib! Certainly I do not wish to see you plunging harshly into the blood of Muslims shouting the Commander of the Faithful has been killed. Beware, do not kill on account of me except my killer.

Wait till I die by his existing stroke. Then strike him one stroke for his stroke and do not dismember the limbs of the man, for I have heard the Messenger of God saying: Avoid cutting limbs even though it may be a

rabid dog."[1]

The children of the Imam (ʿa) were sitting silently, listening to the pleasant and life-refreshing words of their father while sorrow and pain intensely pressured their throats. At the end of his will, the Imam (ʿa) fainted and when he opened his eyes again, he said, "O Hasan, I need to say a few words to you. This is the last night of my life. When I die, wash my body with your hands, and shroud my body. You should personally be responsible for my shrouding and burial. Offer the death prayer upon my body and, in the darkness of night, bury my body secretly away from the city of Kufa**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, so that no one should be aware about the place of my burial."

Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** remained alive for two days, and on Thursday night, the first of the last ten days of the Ramadan in 40 A.H. at the night of the twentieth, at the age of 63, departed from this world. His honorable son Imam al-Hasan washed his body with his own hands and said, "Know that after Imam Ali (ʿa), repeating the statement of *allahu-akbar* seven times shouldn't be recited upon any one's dead body."

Imam Ali (ʿa) was buried at a place named al-Ghari, the present Najaf, and the period of his caliphate was four years and two months.

After the martyrdom of Imam Ali (ʿa),**Error! Bookmark not defined.** Imam al-Hasan (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.** stood up to deliver the sermon. Starting his sermon with statements of praising and thanking God and invocations of His blessings upon the Holy Prophet, he said, "Tonight, a person has died whose predecessors hadn't understood his reality and those coming after will never be able to see one like him. The one who, when he fought, had Gabriel on the right side and Michael on the left side with him. By God, he died at the same night when Moses died, Jesus was raised to the heavens, and the Quran was sent. Know that he hasn't left any silver and gold coin except for seven hundred Dirhams that were saved from his salary and he wanted to purchase a servant for the family with that saved amount."

Al-Qaʿqaʿ ibn Zurarah then stood up and said, "Pleasure of God be upon you, O Commander of the Faithful! By God, your life was the key to everything good. If people had accepted, they would have eaten from above their heads and from under their feet, and the blessings of God would have surrounded them; but they remained thankless for this blessing and

(1) *Nahj al-Balaghah*, letter 47.

preferred the world over the Hereafter."

Abu'l-Aswad al-Du'ali composed some poetic verses in praise of Imam Ali (ʿa)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**:

*Tell Muʿawiyah**Error! Bookmark not defined.** ibn Harb that taunting eyes will never decrease*

Did you make us mourners in Ramadan? Who was the most superior among all?

The best of all riders; the best of all those who put shoes in their feet, and the best of all those who recited the verses of the Quran.

If you look at the face of al-Husayn's father, you witness his illumination around

O Ali, wherever a man of Quraysh may be known, you are the best in lineage and religion.

Saʿsaʿah ibn Sawhan, famous for eloquence and wit, said, "May my father and mother be sacrificed for you, O Commander of the Faithful and God's miracles be refreshed for you! You were born cleansed; were patient, an epic fighter, and whatever you cherished, you accomplished it. You make a profitable deal with God, rushed to Him; He too accepted you with glad tidings; the angels surrounded you; got your residence next to the Holy Prophet (s). God Almighty assigned you a place next to him and bestowed upon you a position similar to his. I beseech God Who indebted us with your following, bestowed divine graces to follow your traditions and befriend your friends and be your enemies' enemy, to grant us association with you, because you achieved an exalted position that none has achieved before you; you achieved a distinction that wasn't awarded to anyone else. In the path of God, as a vanguard to the Prophet (s), you fought in the best manner, made the religion of God steadfast, reinforced the traditions, and silenced the seditions. Islam became stable with you and religion got organized by you, and the virtues were accumulated in you that hadn't been assembled in other than you. Before any one else, you accepted the invitation of the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, preferred his following superior to anything else, acted as his vanguard to help him, sacrificed your life in the path of God, and pulled your sword from its sheath for his help. Every brave tyrant was defeated through you, and every infidel was insulted by your hand. Infidelity, polytheism and oppression were plucked by you and you destroyed the deviated and rebellious. O Commander of the Faithful, may the distinctions and privileges God has blessed upon you please you! You were the nearest to

the Prophet (s) and you believed him before any one else. In acquiring knowledge and understanding, you were superior to all; in certainty, most perfect, most brave and courageous, and your precedence to Islam is greater than all. Thus, God doesn't deprive us of rewards for mourning you, because you were the key to all things good and closed upon us the gates of all evil. With your martyrdom, the gates of evil have been reopened and the gates of goodness have been closed. If people listened to your words, bounties would have flowed from the top of their heads and from under their feet, but, alas, they preferred the world over the Hereafter."

In this manner, the radiance of that most superior human being, born inside the Holy Kaʿbah and martyred in the Mosque of Kufa,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** was buried. This world neither saw nor will it ever see any one comparable to him after the Holy Prophet (s)**Error! Bookmark not defined.**. In campaigns and self-sacrificing, he had no match. In knowledge, awareness of the mysteries of existence and other privileges, he was an amalgamation of contradictory characteristics that can never be combined in the existence of a single individual:

Miscellaneous virtues were assembled in you,
And, as such, you don't have a match.
As a statesman righteous, as a politician brave,
An ascetic bold, benevolent and self-sacrificing.